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Seventy-three outrageous ways to rip into 2016 and leave your comfort zone in the dust. PLUS: Take our 21-Day #RideStreak Challenge. **By BICYCLING staff and contributors**

62 PATCHES!

Cycling's traditional badge of honor is back and cooler than ever. The surprising evolution of this humble keepsake, plus one collection that will blow your mind. **By Chris Klibowitz**

66 COLD WILD RIDE

A winter-bike-racing newbie seeks adventure in Alaska and discovers that sometimes the secret to glory is to slow down. BONUS: 5 ways to beat the cold. **By Tracy Ross**

FOR BONUS TABLET CONTENT FROM THIS AND PAST ISSUES, GO TO BICYCLING.COM/IPAD AND DOWNLOAD THE APP.

Christina Gandolfo; Mitch Mandel; Carl Battreall

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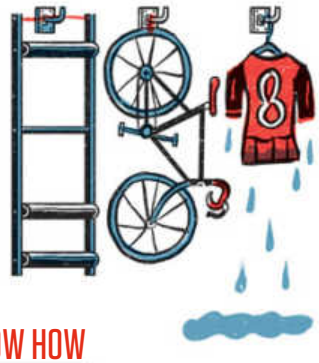
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Photographed by José Mandojana. Gian Dalle sends it in Seattle. Which dares will you take this year? Find out on page 50.

Clockwise from top: Kevin Scott Batchelor; Mitch Mandel (X2); Jakob Hinrichs; Matt Lingo



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EDITORIAL OFFICE
400 South 10th Street, Emmaus, PA 18098
BICYCLING@rodale.com

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Geoff Madden ADVERTISING SALES REPRESENTATIVE 212/808-1316
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Matthew Jacobs SALES ASSISTANT 610/967-7619
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Nicholas Freedman MEDIA HOUNDS, INC. NORTHWESTERN REPRESENTATIVE nick@mediahoundsinc.com
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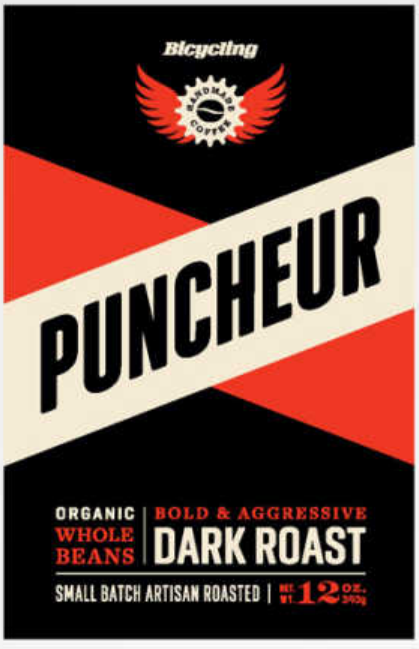
THIS MONTH'S TOP TIPS, BEST ADVICE, AND PERSONAL PICKS FROM OUR EDITOR **BILL STRICKLAND**

1

TRY SOMETHING A LITTLE NUTS THIS YEAR. OR A LOT NUTS. I'm not talking about circling a date on the calendar and training up for some lifetime-list event (though that's cool, too). I'm talking about ripping down a waterslide in full kit (*p. 53*), or ringing all your friends' doorbells then sprinting off madly on your bike (*p. 59*). But I'm also talking about using your bicycle to unite and empower people (*p. 58*), or not being afraid to break rules when those rules are oppressive, offensive, and morally repugnant (*p. 54*). And I'm talking about hauling home a couch via bike (*p. 56*). Why? It's our belief that if you spend some time pedaling sideways through this world, you'll turn it into a better place—and yourself into a better person.

2

Let's take a dare together: Go to RodaleU.com and sign up to join the BICYCLING staff on a 21-Day #RideStreak Challenge as we kick off 2016 with a shot of fun, energy, motivation, and community. The #RideStreak is part of "The New Year, New You Challenge," a program we put together with other Rodale brands that lets you try things like becoming a runner in just three weeks, learning how to do yoga effectively ("powerfully," promises *Men's Health*), cooking for yourself to lose weight, and even figuring out how to be more compassionate. Check it out. And I hope you're there for me after the end of the first week, when, research shows, about a quarter of us abandon our resolutions.



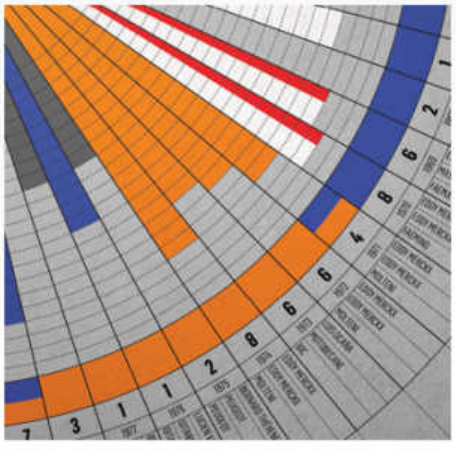
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ATTACK YOUR DAY WITH PUNCHEUR, OUR OWN ORGANIC, HANDMADE ROAST—NEW TO OUR ONLINE STORE: SHOP.BICYCLING.COM

4

73

There are 71 challenges in our "We Dare You!" story, plus another on the cover. Here's a bonus one: I double-dog-dare someone to complete all 72 this year. Let me know how it goes.



5

Out on the lunch ride one day, we started arguing about which color of bike was the fastest. Someone pointed out that when light is bent through a prism, red passes through the quickest. Someone else cited a famous study (it turned out to be a 1988 finding from Cornell University) that proved that athletes wearing black were more aggressive—which could tenuously be claimed to relate to speed. Someone tried to lay a claim at the next town sign. When we really looked into the issue, however, we couldn't find anyone who could say that, for instance, black was faster than white in a wind tunnel. So we set our own standard: We enlisted veteran reporter Kip Mikler to research the history of the Tour de France and calculate which color of bike had done the best in racing's most iconic proving ground. Then, in collaboration with the designers at Massif Central, we turned the answer (and all the data that led to it) into a striking, luxuriously made print in a limited edition of 100. Read an interview with Massif on page 34, and secure one of the rare prints for yourself at the BICYCLING Store (shop.bicycling.com).

Portrait: Brakethrough Media; Massif Central

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ASK BICYCLING

ALL YOUR RIDE QUANDARIES—SOLVED

WHY DO 'CROSS RACERS WEAR SKINSUITS?

Superhero fantasies—duh! But really, the garment does have performance advantages. Though a skinsuit's one-piece construction makes it the most aerodynamic choice in a time trial or road race, 'cross racers appreciate more that it can't ride up like a jersey might, which can be aggravating and



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uncomfortable when you're running, jumping, and otherwise negotiating an obstacle-filled course. There's also less spare fabric to snag on your bike when hopping on and off or shouldering it. Since events are generally an hour or less, and repairs take place in a pit, there's no reason to carry snacks and tools, so you don't need the pockets of a jersey. Of course, there are also style points to consider: For many 'cross racers, the clean lines of a unitard are de rigueur, much like shaved legs in a road race.

▶ Will cold weather lower my tire pressure? I don't want to get a pinch flat.
When you take your bike out of a warm house and into the chilly air, your tire pressure does decrease, says Josh Poertner, president of Indianapolis-based pump maker Silca. "A 10-degree drop in temperature will result in a roughly 2 percent decrease in tire pressure," he explains. For road tires, that equates to about 2 psi—probably not enough to be the reason you get a pinch flat. Plus, once you're pedaling, friction from the road or trail will warm the air inside your tire, driving the pressure slightly higher—likely 2 psi or less.

▶ Why are bike lanes green?
They aren't green everywhere. Denmark often uses blue to mark bike lanes, while the Netherlands frequently paints them a reddish hue. But by the time the United States started improving its cycling infrastructure in the 1970s, those colors—as well as yellow, white, and purple—were already linked to specific traffic associations. So the Federal Highway Administration settled on the most obvious remaining choice. We like to think green lanes are a visual reminder of the earth-friendliness of bikes as transportation.

▶ Lately I've noticed people using tire plugs to fix flats. How do they work?
Wonderfully—as long as you're running tubeless tires. If more people knew how great plugs are, fewer riders would be seen wrangling trailside flats, says Phil Fifer, a professional bike mechanic and bike tour operator in Santa Rosa, California. Plugs work best when there's a tear or puncture that's a little too big for sealant to fix or when the goop inside your tire is too old to do the job properly. "If the sealant has been in the tire for more than a month," says Fifer, "there's a good chance it has hardened inside the tire and lost the ability to fill a hole."

To use a plug, you don't even need to take the wheel off the bike. The kit comes with rubber strips and a poker you use to push the strip into the tire. Insert the plug, creating an airtight seal, then reinflate. "Some of the rubber will hang out of the tire," says Fifer. "Just trim it when you get home." Then put more sealant into your tire to help keep the strip in place and prevent a future flat.

▶ My fingers turn into icicles on winter rides. Which will keep them warmer: gloves or mittens?
Short answer: mittens. The larger finger pockets create a toasty environment by taking advantage of the combined body heat generated by all of your digits, says Bobby Pitoniak, an associate marketing manager at apparel company Bellwether, in Long Beach, California. Mittens sacrifice some dexterity—but so do frozen fingers. If you have trouble operating your brakes and shifters while wearing them, try lobster gloves, which house your index and middle fingers in one pocket, and your ring and pinkie in another. You get the coziness of a mitten, with some added maneuverability. Another option: battery-powered heated gloves. They're pricey (L.L. Bean's are $200), but if you are desperate for extra warmth, they may be worth the investment.

▶ Why does my nose run when I ride? I swear I don't have a cold.
There are a few reasons. During exercise, your body secretes adrenaline. That's essentially the same snot rocket–launching chemical that's found in nasal decongestants such as Sudafed, says Michael Ross, MD, a sports medicine physician at the Rothman Institute in Philadelphia. Also, on chilly days, the blood vessels in your extremities constrict to preserve body heat. This means that less blood

WINNING ADVICE

GOT ANY BIKE-CLEANING WISDOM?

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JONATHAN SCHILLER
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SHARE YOUR BEST TIPS TO WIN!

How do you motivate yourself to get out and ride on cold mornings?

Submit your answer to BICYCLING@rodale.com with the subject line "Winning Advice."

(UM...)

WHY DO I WIPE MY CHAIN AFTER APPLYING LUBE? DOESN'T THAT REMOVE WHAT I JUST PUT ON?

Nope. Chain lube is designed to lubricate your chain's inner pins and rollers, not the outer plates. Those inside pieces rotate to help your chain conform to the chainrings and cogs, so it's important that they keep moving freely. But lubricant left on the outer surfaces of the chain will attract grit and grime, which can muck up your shifting and speed the wear of your drivetrain. When you wipe the chain, you clean off the outer layer without affecting that important inner lubrication.



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flows through your nose, causing the tissues inside your nasal passages to contract—a process that forces spare fluid out of your schnozz. And last, your nose acts as a filter and traps air pollutants as you ride. "They trigger an inflammatory response, which leads to increased mucus production," says Ross.

► Why is the chain on the right side of the bike?
Though it's uncommon, some bikes, especially BMX and late 19th-century models, use a left-side drive. But the history behind the more common right-side orientation is pretty murky. "My guess would be because of the right-hand threading on the rear drivetrain cogs of the early bikes," says Jeff Archer, curator of the Museum of Mountain Bike Art and Technology and owner of First Flight Bicycles in Statesville, North Carolina. If the chain were on the left side, the force and direction of your pedaling would pull those cogs to the left, gradually causing them to unthread. (This is why your bike's left pedal is reverse threaded.) But with the setup on the right, the cogs tighten down rather than loosen.

► I have a habit of using only my rear brake. Is that a no-no?
Well, it'll stop your bike—but it's not the best way to do it, says elite cyclocross racer and BICYCLING test editor Mike Yozell. Using just the rear brake can cause that wheel to skid or slide, which could make you lose control. Relying solely on the more powerful front brake could be even worse: It can lead to a radical forward transfer of weight, sending you flying over the handlebar. For the best stopping power and control, Yozell suggests using both brakes together, with a slight bias to the front brake.

► What's the next big frame material?
Are you expecting some brand-new, space-age compound? Think again: Carbon will probably still be king, but with some key differences. "It'll have additives in places where the frame needs to be tougher and resist impact more," says Craig Calfee, who makes carbon fiber and bamboo frames in La Selva Beach, California. This means that bikes will be more resilient in crashes, and could be made lighter without compromising the strength of the structure. What kind of additives? Carbon nanofibers, graphene, hemp, silk,

2.1

AVERAGE NUMBER OF POINTS ON THE BODY MASS INDEX PEOPLE GAINED OVER FIVE YEARS FOR EVERY HOUR LATER THEY WENT TO SLEEP ON WEEKNIGHTS. WANT TO CLIMB FASTER? HEAD TO BED AN HOUR EARLIER.

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY



and even titanium foam are all possible add-ins for the bikes of the future.

There's room for innovation in the carbon fiber itself, too. Currently, frames are constructed from a composite material made of carbon fiber and epoxy (a fancy glue). There's endless variation in the process: The type of carbon, method of layering, and epoxy formulation can all have huge impacts on the strength, shape, and feel of a frame—and are all likely areas for future improvements.

▶ I've heard horror stories about cyclists who have driven into the garage with a bike on the roof rack. How can I make sure this doesn't happen to me?
Buy enough bikes that your car won't fit in the garage. A more realistic approach: "Put a sticker on your garage-door opener to remind you that your bike may still be on top," says Summer Henderson, brand director at car-rack company Yakima, in Beaverton, Oregon. Need a more obvious cue? Toss your opener in the back seat when you put your bike on the roof, or put a cone in your garage bay that prevents you from driving straight in. Still nervous? Might be time to look into a hitch rack.

▶ One member of my riding group is totally obnoxious. What's the most polite way to ride away from him?
We shuttled this to one of the most considerate and learned riders we know: retired pro Ted King, formerly of Cannondale-Garmin. "There are times, even in the peloton, when you're stuck near a rider who's notoriously dangerous, skittish, or just plain annoying," he says. Buck up—the pack is a microcosm for life in general. Act as you would with a bothersome coworker or neighbor: Be friendly and courteous, but don't engage in lengthy conversations. Instead, touch on the weather and some interesting movies you've seen. Then casually adjust your position in the group: Drop back on the next climb, pull out to blow a snot rocket, or sprint for the town sign.

READER SURVEY

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PART OF A TOUGH ROAD RIDE?

CRESTING A GNARLY HILL.... 40%

PUSHING THE PACE ON THE FLATS.....20%

ZOOMING DOWN A DESCENT.....18%

CHATTING WITH FRIENDS OVER A POSTRIDE BREW.....12%

SPRINTING FOR A TOWN LINE SIGN.....10%

SOURCE: BICYCLING FACEBOOK POLL

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Seltzer's Blowing Up!

Here's how the fizzy beverage can refresh your hydration routine BY MOLLY HURFORD

ZERO

NUMBER OF CALORIES IN SELTZER WATER. SOME SELTZERS ARE FLAVORED, BUT AVOID DIET DRINKS MASQUERADING AS SELTZER: IF A DRINK CONTAINS ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS LIKE ASPARTAME—WHICH HAS BEEN LINKED TO HEADACHES AND INSOMNIA—SKIP IT. GET A PLAIN SELTZER AND ADD YOUR OWN FLAVORS (LIKE FRESH LEMON OR LIME) INSTEAD.

"I GOTTA GO!"

Say that a lot? Maybe lay off the fizz before a ride. The carbonation can irritate the bladder lining, which may cause you to pee more, says Stacy Sims, PhD, exercise physiologist and cofounder of Osmo Nutrition.





HELP YOUR GUT

If long or hard rides give you an upset stomach, sip carbonated water. It may calm belly woes and has been shown to help soothe indigestion and constipation.

FILL 'ER UP

Some pros, like Lachlan Morton of the Jelly Belly Cycling Team p/b Maxxis, fill their bottles with seltzer. Morton likes his with a bit of apple juice and some sea salt for electrolytes.



SELTZER > SODA
Seltzer won't rot your teeth or leach calcium from your bones the way that colas can.

NONALCOHOLIC POMEGRANATE FIZZ SELTZER COCKTAIL

1½ oz. pomegranate juice

1½ oz. fresh lime juice

½ oz. simple syrup (sugar dissolved in water in a 1:1 ratio)

Club soda or seltzer

Lime zest twist, for garnish

Pour juices and syrup into an ice-filled shaker. Shake, then strain into a tall ice-filled glass. Fill to top with club soda or seltzer. Toast to your ride.

SELTZER = CLUB SODA = SPARKLING WATER?

It's all water injected with carbon dioxide, though club soda—and some sparkling water—contains sodium. Check labels before you buy.

Sources: *European Journal of Gastroenterology & Hepatology*, *International Journal of Sports Nutrition*; Figure: Jakob Vogel



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That's How You Roll

Riding rollers can help you maintain your fitness through the winter, smooth out your pedal stroke, and perfect your balance on the bike. Here's how to get started. BY JENNIFER WARD BARBER



1 Get support / Set up next to something sturdy like a doorjamb, workbench, or table. The key is to support yourself at a height that's roughly the same as your handlebar to stay stable when you're grabbing or letting go, says three-time Olympic road cyclist John Howard.



2 Get started / Instead of placing your bike on the rollers first, move the bike next to them, straddle the top tube, and lift the rear wheel into position. Then bring the front wheel up. Grab your bench, sit on the saddle, and start pedaling right away while still holding on.



3 Get up to speed / If you pedal too slow, it's hard to stay upright. Find a gear in the middle of your range, and try to get to 80 rpm quickly, Howard advises. As you increase your cadence, gradually take your hand off the workbench or door frame.



4 Loosen your grip / Holding the handlebar in an iron grip will cause the front wheel to twitch. Instead, back off and use a light touch to keep the bar facing ahead, says Howard. Focus your eyes on the rollers; looking elsewhere makes it harder to stay in the center, and is an advanced skill.



5 Take it easy / Learn on flat pedals or wear running shoes on clipless pedals, suggests Dotsie Bausch, 2012 Olympic silver medalist. This allows you to put a foot down quickly if you need to. And "the more you relax," she says, "the smoother you're going to be."



6 Wind down / Ready to wrap up? Slow your pedal stroke, and when you feel like you're losing your balance, reach over to your support, says Howard. Stop pedaling and put both feet down on the sides of the rollers before you bring your leg up and over to dismount.

ASK AN EXPERT



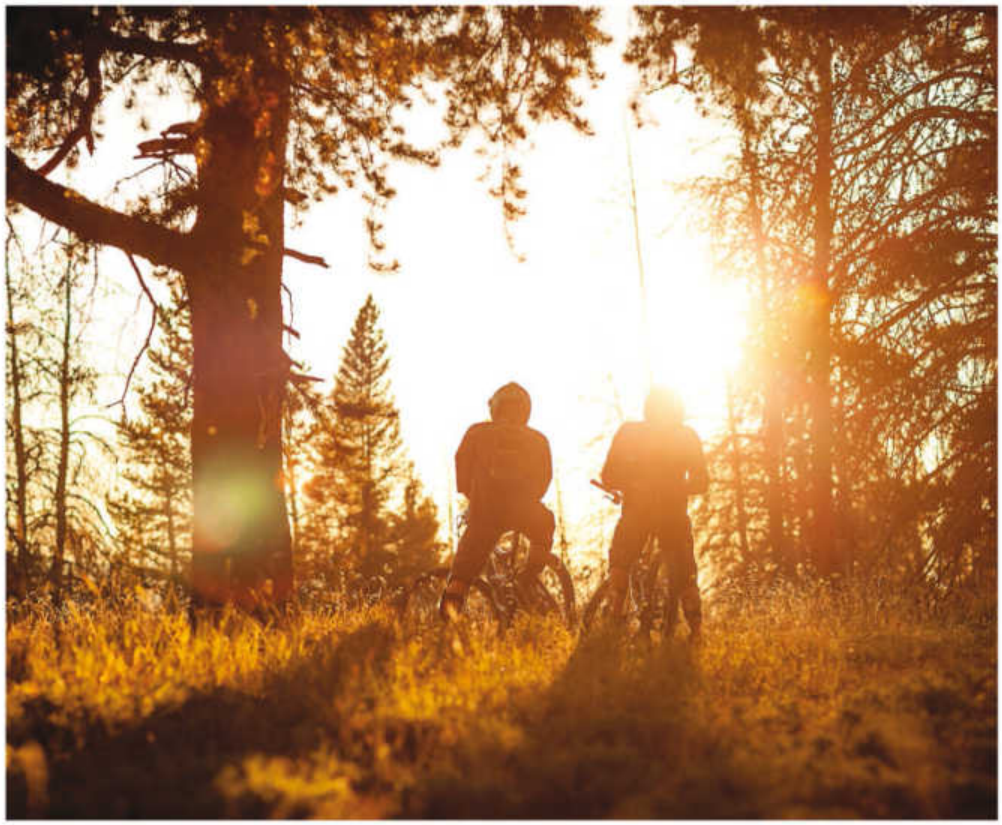
Q/A Is that beer hand-up going to slow me in my race? You might not like this answer, but even half of a 12-ounce can of beer can slow your reaction time, says Katie Rhodes, a registered dietitian in Little Rock, Arkansas. That's no good in a fast-paced and crowded pack. Nor does it help your concentration: "You need a mental edge, especially during a race," says Rhodes. Apart from that, alcohol is a diuretic, which can dehydrate you, leading to cramping and lightheadedness, and impair muscle recovery. So you might want to enjoy that Colt 45 after you cross the line. Unless, of course, you're just out there to have a good time—taking hand-ups is certainly conducive to having fun.

FOR OUR VIDEO TUTORIAL ON MASTERING ROLLERS, GO TO BICYCLING.COM/ROLLERS101.

Beer handcuffs: Colin McSherry

Illustrations by JAKOB HINRICHS


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Daniel Milchev

Should You Ride Hungry?

Training on an empty stomach from time to time can lead to big results. Here's how to do it right.

BY COURTNEY JOHNSON

ASK AN EXPERT



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WHAT IT IS ▸ The technical term for riding on empty is fasted training—basically, eating minimal to no carbohydrates before a ride.

HOW IT WORKS ▸ During exercise, your body uses two kinds of stored energy: fast-burning glycogen derived from carbs; and fat, which is a longer-lasting fuel source. As you get fitter, your body becomes more efficient, and gets more of its fuel from fat at the same speed or pace.

THE BENEFITS ▸ Proponents of fasted training claim that forcing the body to burn fat in the absence of carbs makes it use energy more efficiently over time, which helps glycogen stores go further when your tank is full. They also say it can prime your muscles to stock more glycogen when you do carb up.

HOW TO DO IT ▸ Ride before breakfast, says Asker Jeukendrup, MSc, PhD, sports nutritionist and exercise physiologist at Loughborough University in the UK. Your body is in a glycogen-depleted state, so it's ready to resort to fat for fuel. Go no longer than 60 to 90 minutes, at a moderate effort—you should be able to hold a steady conversation without gasping. Going harder requires the body to dip into stored glycogen, and you'll bonk more quickly.

AFTER YOUR RIDE ▸ Restock carbohydrate stores promptly—aim to eat a meal with a four-to-one carb-to-protein ratio (like a bagel with peanut butter) within 30 to 60 minutes of finishing the ride. Rehydrate within 60 to 90 minutes to further speed up recovery.

WHEN TO STOP ▸ Fasted training requires extra recovery time; overdoing it can lead to injury or illness. Do these workouts just once or twice a week when you're mostly riding long and easy, says Jeukendrup. If you start racing or doing a lot of intense rides, it's time to cut it out of your routine—even the fittest riders need carbs to train and ride hard.

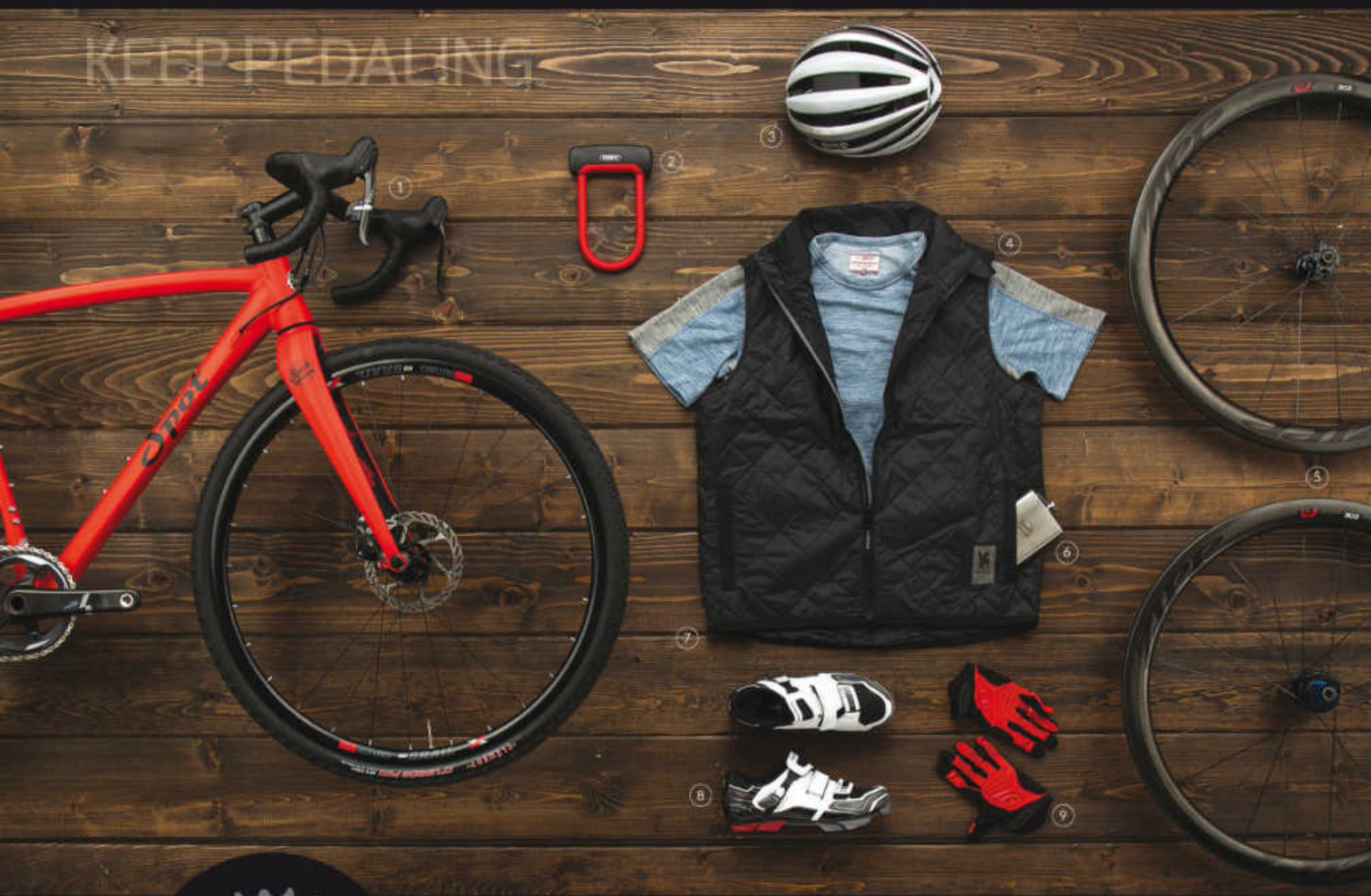
Q/A **As soon as daylight savings time ends I don't feel like riding as much, and I just feel down. I think it might be seasonal affective disorder, but is that a real thing?** SAD is definitely real: It's a form of depression caused by a disruption to your circadian rhythms (your body's biological clock) due to reduced daylight. It affects about 20 percent of the population in North America—more women than men, says Al Lewy, MD, PhD, professor of psychiatry at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland. Symptoms include melancholy, fatigue, carb cravings, weight gain, and lack of motivation. The most effective way to ward off SAD? Get exposure to sunlight as early as possible. This is why forcing yourself to get out and ride first thing in the morning is worth the effort, Lewy says. Another treatment is light-box therapy, which involves exposure to an over-the-counter device that mimics outdoor light for about 30 to 120 minutes a day. If that doesn't work, and you're still feeling blue, see a mental health professional.



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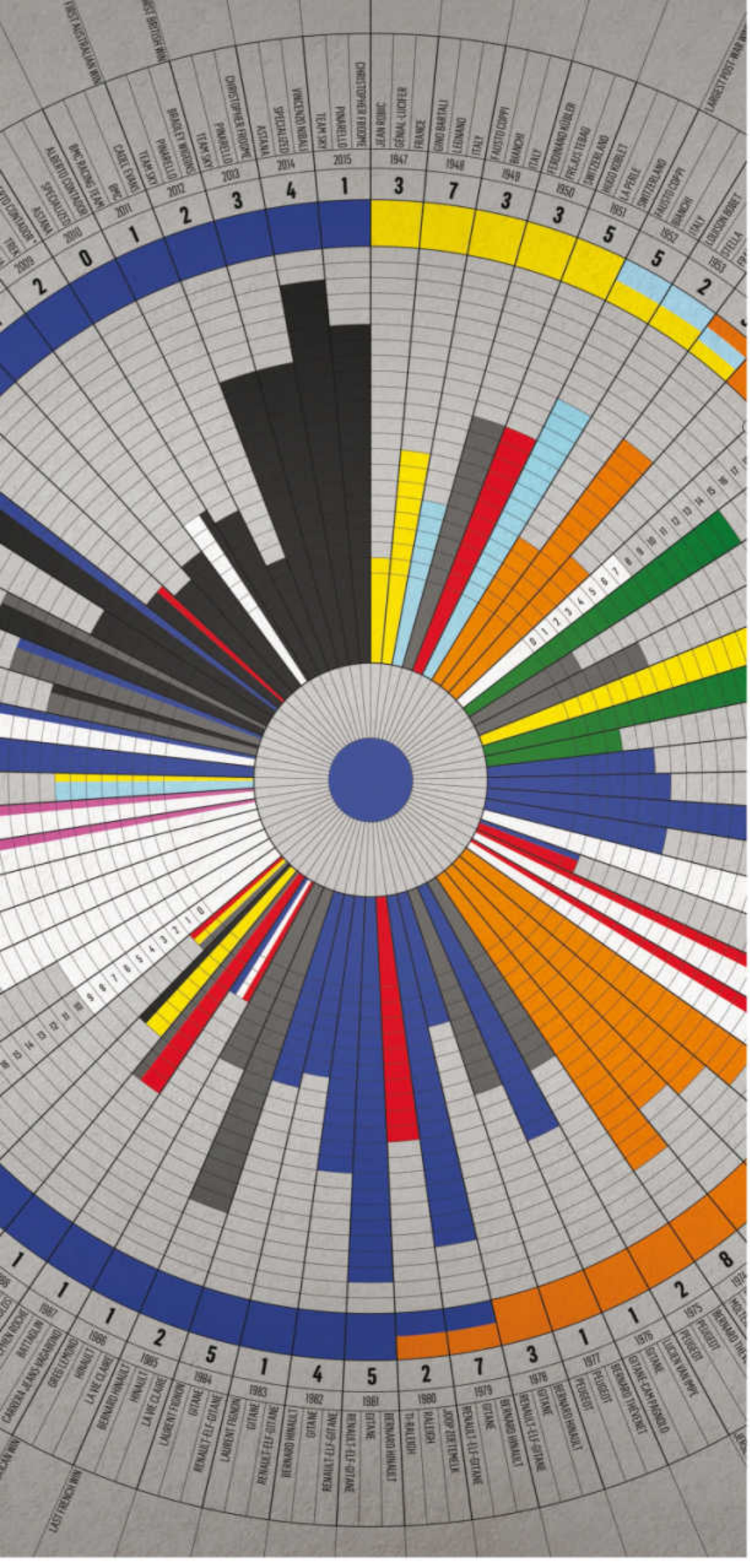
THE ONE THING THAT CHANGED IT ALL

FINISHING 18TH

I started running competitively when I was 12. After I began racing cyclocross in 2013, it reminded me of cross-country. Oddly enough, they smell the same—the scent of fall! Last year at my first UCI race, Jingle Cross in Iowa City, it was freezing. As I pre-rode the course I wondered what I'd gotten myself into. It seemed sadistic. I was out of my element. Even so, I was excited to start: I was riding against people I'd read about. It was amazing that I could race them at that level. When I got a $20 check for my 18th-place finish, I was ecstatic. You don't get as good racing in the local scene—you've got to push your limits to get better.

DANI ARMAN, 25 / PROGRAM MANAGER AT HITACHI DATA SYSTEMS / ST. CHARLES, ILLINOIS

Photograph by **ALEX WALLBAUM**



What's the Fastest Bike Color?

For our limited-edition poster, "Les Couleurs de la Victoire," writer Kip Mikler chronicled the hues of every Tour de France–winning bike since World War II. We then turned to Howard Smith and James Mason, better known as Massif Central, to turn it into art. Here's how the London-based design team transformed piles of data into this explosion of color. BY JOE LINDSEY

The first graphic I created was in 2011 after a trip I took with some mates, riding Italy from top to toe. We'd talked about creating a memento that could reflect what we did. People collect all kinds of data on their Strava account or Garmin, but it just sits there. We wanted to think about how people could express themselves with data.—*James Mason*

We try to create a piece that is beautiful and attracts the eye from a distance. But when you get close, it tells a story.—*Howard Smith*

Our designs' similarity to a bike wheel is quite by accident. When James was working on the illustration from the Italy trip, it was the approach that worked best. To end up with a circle is counterintuitive.—*H.S.*

With the radial system, everything has a purpose, and the beauty stems from that purpose.—*J.M.*

What was fun about the BICYCLING job was starting off not knowing what it would look like.—*J.M.*

What on the face of it is a simple thing—what color was the bike that won each Tour?—was in fact an extended research project. And there's one year—1960—that the brand is unknown. No one knows what that year's champion, Gastone Nencini, was riding or even what he was supposed to be riding.—*H.S.*

The print is not obvious at first glance. You need to take time to work it out and understand it.—*J.M.*

The color blue took the lead in 1981, but since carbon fiber frames were introduced, black is catching up fast.—*J.M.*

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Celso, 27, won the inaugural women's Red Hook Crit in 2014, three years after battling cancer.

KNOW HOW

She Kicked Cancer's Ass

Jo Celso of Team Cinelli Chrome beat Hodgkin's lymphoma only to be sidelined two years later by a debilitating crash. Here's what the San Diego native has learned about resilience—and how she returned to riding better than ever. BY SARAH GEARHART

▶ **After a race,** I was rubbing my shoulders and noticed a tiny bump on my neck. I thought it was a muscle strain. My doctor did a biopsy and took out a lymph node. A couple of weeks later I found out I had cancer.

▶ **I posted on Facebook:** *I have cancer. WTF.* People thought it was weird, but it's stressful to tell one person that you have cancer. I didn't want to go through it with everyone. It would have been too emotionally draining.

▶ **Chemotherapy was a roller coaster.** Some days I was incredibly depressed. If I hadn't had cycling, I would have felt aimless. A lot of my teammates encouraged me and asked me to hang out. The community was great.

▶ **I rode multiple days** a week, up to four hours at a time. I'd feel fine, but once I got out there, the same effort cost a lot more energy.

▶ **Yeah, I thought about giving up.** My body was trashed after chemo. It took about three months before I was at baseline again. You have to realize it's going to be a long climb to where you were.

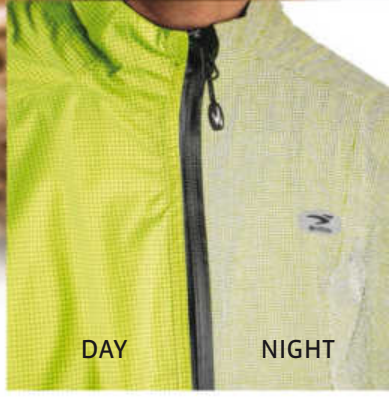
▶ **On the bike, part of getting really good is losing a lot.** You have to face challenges and come back, and learn to not become defeated.

▶ **It blows me away** how resilient my body is—to be weak and bedridden, only to build back to an even stronger version who travels around the world to race bikes.

▶ **I'm speckled with** scars from road rash and chemo, but I'm thankful for the vessel I'm in and how it enables a beautiful life for me.

Photograph by **MATT LINGO**

THE SURVIVAL KIT



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These Bikes Beat Poverty

In 2005, adventurer and former trials world champion Hans Rey, 49, launched Wheels 4 Life, a charity that donates bicycles in developing nations. Here's how it changes lives—and how you can help. BY JOE LINDSEY

951K

DISTANCE AUSTRALIAN CYCLIST LINDSEY COLLA RODE ACROSS THE OUTBACK LAST SUMMER TO RAISE MONEY FOR WHEELS FOR LIFE. ON A UNICYCLE.



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Number of patients that health workers on bikes in Uganda's Kyankwanzi District treat each month—it's four times as many as they could visit on foot.

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7,550

IN UGANDA, ONE RECIPIENT USED HIS BIKE TO GET A JOB DELIVERING WATER TO A CONSTRUCTION SITE. "HE EARNED ENOUGH MONEY TO GO TO SCHOOL," SAYS REY. "HE'S STUDYING TO BE A DOCTOR NOW."

HOW TO HELP

W4L doesn't accept donated gear (it costs more to ship and refurbish a bike than it does to buy a new one), but encourages other creative ways to raise money for the organization. One idea: Host a movie night—a home screening with donations, or partner with a local bike shop for a larger crowd. "No fundraiser is too small," he says. W4L offers two DVDs ($10 each), one chronicling projects in Tanzania; the other on its work in Kenya and Uganda.

"When someone receives a bike, the whole family benefits, says Rey. Kids use it to get to school, parents ride to market or to a job in a nearby town, even neighbors sometimes borrow it.

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◀ "They've been doing this longer than me, so I'll just leave them to it," says Gould, a self-described "lazy beekeeper."





KNOW HOW

Just Add Bees

Georgia Gould of the Luna Pro Team has an Olympic bronze medal—and one of the hardest-working backyards in Colorado's Front Range. Here's her advice for harvesting some sweet ride fuel. BY MOLLY HURFORD

▶ My husband and I got our first hive in 2011 after we watched a documentary called *The Vanishing Honeybee,* about how bees are dying off. We were like, "We have to do our part!"

▶ It's a glorified landlord position: I give you a house, and I take your honey. The first year, we got three gallons in one harvest! It doesn't require much work, and you need only three square feet in your backyard.

▶ A hive, bees, and supplies cost about $500 if you buy everything new, but you can find it all way cheaper on Craigslist or by meeting local beekeepers.

▶ My bees are docile, but I wear a veil most of the time while dealing with them. I've had one get into my shirt. I ripped it off so fast! I wish someone had been there to see it—I was just running around and freaking out.

▶ You can harvest a couple of times a year, but I wait until the fall. You have to do it inside or at night (when the bees rest) because you need to be where they can't get to the honey.

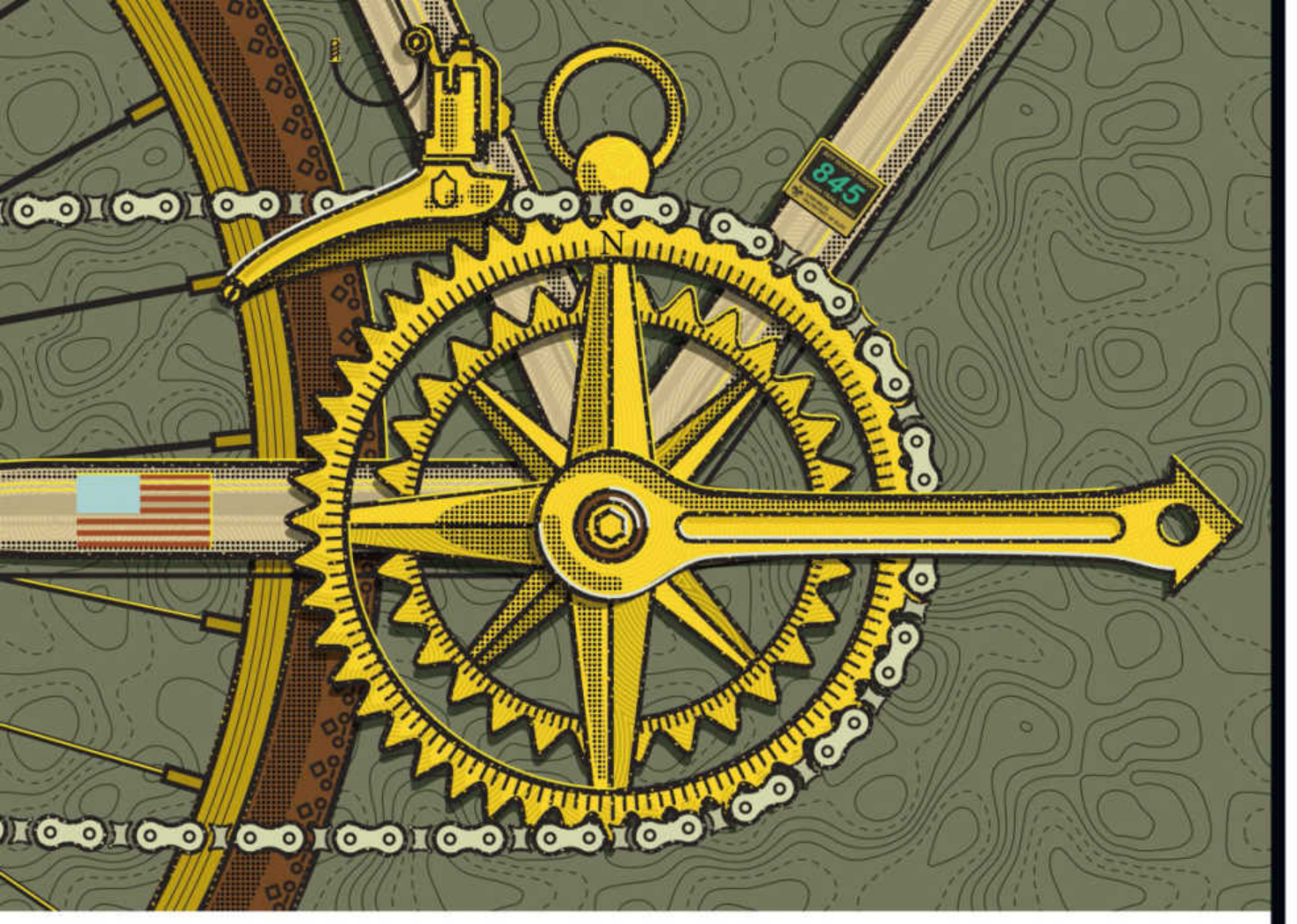
▶ What's really cool is when you're done harvesting and you put your honey-covered equipment outside, the bees immediately swarm and clean it, and take the honey back into the hive.

▶ I eat the honey pre- and postride on toast with butter—and in peppermint tea before and after cold cyclocross races and training rides.

▶ People ask what my neighbors say. I don't even think they know about the bees. They're not swarming like crazy. They're busy! Busy like bees.

Photography by **KEVIN SCOTT BATCHELOR**


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KNOW HOW

The Boy Scout's Guide to Riding Across the Country

Last June, seven Boy Scouts from Troop 845 in Carrboro, North Carolina, pedaled across the United States—unsupported—and raised more than $30,000 in memory of a schoolmate who died of cancer. Here's their advice for aspiring cross-country charity riders. BY MOLLY HURFORD

▶ Train lots, and with your panniers (or whatever gear you'll be carrying on your bike). It will make the first week much more pleasant.—*Alex Broz, age 16*

▶ Plan ahead, but if you focus too much on what's coming, you'll miss out on the day's adventure. You'll have more fun if you think just about that day's riding.—*Sam Billings, age 17*

▶ Find a cause that speaks to you and raise money on the road as well as before you go. You'll find that the people you meet want to be part of something bigger than themselves.—*Ed Billings, adult crew leader*

▶ Travel light. We encountered many Trans-Am cyclists who were carrying an uncomfortably large load. Two rear panniers is all you need.—*David Margolies, age 16*

▶ Always carry plenty of food and water. You never know when you could be stranded at a closed convenience store.—*S.B.*

▶ Think about how much you use everything you are carrying, and don't be afraid to send stuff ahead—or home.—*Max Morgan, age 17*

▶ Look up from the road. America is a beautiful place, and chances are you will never be in the same spot again.—*D.M.*

FIVE THINGS THEY CARRIED

ORTLIEB BACK-ROLLER CLASSIC PANNIERS were easy to attach to the bike and kept the group's gear dry. ▪ The pump-free **PLATYPUS GRAVITYWORKS WATER FILTER** allowed the riders to hydrate safely on long stretches without services out West. ▪ Cranking classic rock such as Billy Joel and the Eagles on their **OUTDOOR TECH BUCKSHOT HANDLEBAR-MOUNTED SPEAKERS** helped the troop keep their spirits up. ▪ From serving as impromptu rim tape to reattaching panniers to racks when clips snapped, **DUCT TAPE AND ZIP TIES** kept the Scouts' bikes rolling.

Illustration by **@BICYCLECRUMBS**

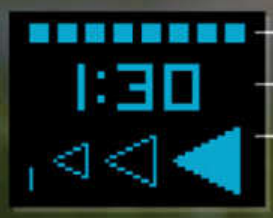
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BY JIMMY CAVALIERI

1▸ SEE HOW JIMMY BUILT HIS BOROUGH BIKE AT BICYCLING.COM/RALEIGHSPRITE.



4▾



2▸



5▾



3▾



1 The Town Bike I Built My friend Taylor calls my 1976 Raleigh Sprite my "borough bike." It cost less than $200 to build, and it's the only one of my bikes that I'm willing to lock up and leave unattended. Of course I would be upset if it got stolen, but I'd also appreciate the thief's distinctive sense of style.

2 Homesweet Homegrown Hot Sauce I'll put hot sauce on anything. Two years ago I got hooked on Orange Crush. It's made from organic habanero peppers grown in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, just a short bike ride from BICYCLING HQ, and packs some legitimate heat. $6

3 Nutcase Little Nutty Even before it was time to buy my now-5-year-old son a helmet, I knew I'd go with Nutcase, which offers cool designs and various sizes to protect daredevils of any age. Plus, the magnetic buckle closure is easy for little Jimmy to operate on his own. $60

4 My License Plate Collection I discovered most of my 20-year-old collection of license plates while riding. Pro tip: They're almost always upside down.

5 Gore Xenon Windstopper Soft Shell Thermo Gloves Every time I've tried to save a few dollars on winter gloves, I've come to regret my purchase on the coldest of days. Not this year. The Xenon gloves have windproof fabric and tall cuffs to preserve the feeling in my fingers. $80

CHOSEN BY ▸ Designer and DIY guy JIMMY CAVALIERI, who made his own 56-cent riding wallet out of a bike-shop gift card, a Chicago bolt, and an asparagus rubber band.

Photograph by **MITCH MANDEL**


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A $200 Wok—Are You for Real?!

Yep, and to the busy cyclist, this carbon steel wok is worth it

BY SELENE YEAGER

AS A COMPETITIVE mountain biker, I train 10 to 15 hours a week. When I'm done riding, I need food and I need it fast so I can get back to writing, housework, and taking care of my family. And that's why I'm a huge fan of stir-fry. The moment I walk in the door, I turn on the stove and toss baby carrots, chopped beets, and pepper strips into the wok, topped with handfuls of chard and kale. The nutritious concoction cooks while I slip off my shoes and put my gear away. When it's fork tender, I turn off the heat, dump a can of sardines on top, and let it all sit while I quickly clean up and change. I return to a delicious recovery meal.

On my electric stove, traditional round-bottom woks take longer to heat up than I'd like and tend to cook unevenly, so getting that delectably crunchy, flash-cooked, stir-fry effect is hard. That's why I was excited to try the JIA Inc. Carbon Steel Wok + Lid, a flat-bottomed beauty with a magnolia wood handle. The wok heated the oil to a sizzle nearly the instant I turned on the stove, and in just a few minutes, the veggies were crisp on the outside, but tender on the inside. I like that it doesn't have a synthetic nonstick coating, which can emit toxic fumes at high heat. Instead, the wok is seasoned to a natural, nonstick surface after three or four uses: I just brush it clean and coat it with oil; then it's ready for another round. The versatile shape and exceptional heat conduction also make it an all-rounder I can use to steam, braise, or stew my meals. And like a finely constructed bike, it's beautiful to look at, too. $200

Get this wok, and other products selected for you by our editors, in the BICYCLING store at **shop.bicycling.com**.

Photograph by **JASON VARNEY**



ENDURANCE ATHLETES USE CONTROVERSIAL METHOD TO BOOST PERFORMANCE

IS IT LEGAL?

Ask endurance athletes about the three most controversial letters in sport and they will tell you: EPO. However, thanks to recent advances in sports nutrition, the discord surrounding EPO is now over. A company has produced a legal solution to the EPO problem.

EPO stands for Erythropoietin, a hormone that gives blood a greater capacity for carrying oxygen. Doctors first used EPO to counter red blood cell loss that resulted from chemotherapy treatment in cancer patients.

When synthetic EPO became available several decades ago, endurance athletes, especially cyclists, started using EPO to gain an advantage during training and races. The reason was simple: with more oxygen being delivered to muscles, performance and endurance improved dramatically.

In the mid-1980s, almost all of the governing bodies in sports banned EPO. Unfortunately, endurance athletes in several sports worked to get around these restrictions by using other blood doping techniques to mask EPO use.

The use of synthetic EPO has been extremely controversial. Several star endurance athletes have admitted using synthetic EPO and have faced severe consequences. The subject of EPO use has also gained significant media attention in the last 10 years.

Fortunately, there's a new legal way for cyclists and other endurance athletes to benefit from boosting EPO production. A company called Biomedical Research Laboratories has developed a natural EPO stimulator specifically for athletes seeking to gain an edge.

The product is called EPO-BOOST®. Taken daily, the ingredients in EPO-BOOST® help the body naturally boost circulating EPO levels. With a boost in EPO levels, more oxygen can reach working muscles resulting in dramatic improvements in athletic performance.

The science behind EPO-BOOST® is equally compelling. Dr. M.T. Whitehead from the Department of Health and Human Performance at Northwestern State University conducted a 28-day double-blind placebo-controlled clinical trial to test the effectiveness of the key ingredient EPO-BOOST®.

The research showed that the active ingredient in EPO-BOOST® increased EPO production by over 90% compared to the group taking the placebo.[1] The supplement group showed significant improvements in athletic performance as measured by VO2max and running economy.

EPO-BOOST® is not a miracle pill and it won't make you a world champion overnight. In fact, most users will see that it takes 3-4 weeks to obtain the full performance benefits of EPO-BOOST®. Athletes who use EPO-BOOST® are sharing their results.

Joe Barr, who finished second in his category in the 2014 Race Across America (RAAM), used EPO-BOOST in his preparation for the race. Joe stated, "Since using EPO-BOOST I have finished top 5 in every World Ultra Marathon race I've entered. I've increased my VO2max and my hematocrit levels have increased from 43 to 47. In short, EPO-BOOST is the best supplement on the planet today."

Joey Mesa, a 2013 USA Cycling Masters Champion, stated, "I started using EPO-BOOST this racing season and can really tell a difference. I'm feeling consistently great in all my races and the ability to keep going hard attack after attack is awesome! I've been racing bikes for over 30 years and tried lots of nutritional products, EPO-BOOST just plain works!"

So EPO-BOOST® provides a total solution for athletes in all sports looking for improved energy, endurance, and recovery. EPO-BOOST® is legal for competition. All ingredients in EPO-BOOST® are in compliance with WADA, UCI, IOC, and NCAA rules. Each batch of EPO-BOOST® is certified to be free of banned substances by the Banned Substances Control Group (BSCG) in Los Angeles.

Biomedical Research Laboratories offers a strong guarantee to back the product. Athletes can use EPO-BOOST® for a full 90 days. If the athlete is not fully satisfied in those 90 days, the athlete receives a prompt refund.

A company spokesman confirmed a special offer. If you order this month, you'll receive Free Enrollment into the company's "Elite Athlete Club" where you'll qualify to receive a full 25% discount on all bottles of EPO-BOOST®. And so you always have EPO-BOOST® in your system to increase your endurance, you'll automatically receive a fresh bottle every 30 days. There are no minimum amounts of bottles to buy and you can cancel at any time. You can order EPO-BOOST® today at www.EPOBOOST.com or by calling 1-800-780-4331.

[1] Whitehead et al. Int J Sport Nutr Exerc Metab, 17 (2007): 378-9.

Hibernate or HTFU?

Depends on whether you're a Joe or a Yehuda—two of the protagonists from the beloved webcomic *Yehuda Moon and the Kickstand Cyclery*. Illustrator Rick Smith conceived of the series in 2008 as a way to chronicle his chilly Cleveland commutes. He and cowriter Brian Griggs have created an original strip to inspire your winter riding—or resting.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS



THE BUILT-IN BALACLAVA



TO RIDE OR NOT TO RIDE? YES.



READ OUR INTERVIEW WITH SMITH AND GRIGGS AT BICYCLING.COM/YEHUDA.





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PHOTOGRAPH BY MATT RAINEY ILLUSTRATIONS BY GRAYHOOD



RIDE LIKE A SUPERHERO

SHRED THE CRAP OUT OF 2016! TWELVE PAGES OF COMFORT-ZONE-BUSTING CHALLENGES THAT WILL MAKE YOU INSANELY FAST, CRAZY FIT, COMPLETELY FEARLESS, OUTRAGEOUSLY HAPPY—AND TURN THIS YEAR INTO YOUR MOST INCREDIBLE YET. BY BICYCLING STAFF & CONTRIBUTORS

WE DARE YOU!

RIDE BIKES AT YOUR WEDDING



PHOTOGRAPH BY TRACIE VAN AUKEN

The sales associate who was helping me try on gowns at the bridal shop didn't know what to say when I asked her, "Do you think I can ride a bike in this dress?"

To be fair, it isn't something most people do at their weddings.

My husband, Nick, and I love riding bikes, especially in urban areas, and when we travel we always try to test a city's bike share program. It's the best way to get to know a place, free of tour buses and stuffy taxis. During a pre-engagement trip to Paris last April we used the Vélib bike share as the primary way to get around, winding through the labyrinth of streets in search of cheese, chocolate, and wine.

Bikes had been such a big part of our courtship in Paris, San Francisco, Philadelphia, and New York City that we felt we had to incorporate them into our wedding last September in Philadelphia. We found a convenient solution: the city's new bike share program, Indego. They agreed to lend us 30 bikes so that we could ride from the ceremony at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology to our reception at the Vesper Boat Club.

We didn't let a drizzle of rain stop us. Our wedding party hooted and hollered and rang cowbells. Drivers and pedestrians stopped to take photos of us and yelled their congratulations.

It wasn't easy to ride in my dress. I had to hitch it up over my Spanx to keep it from getting caught in the spokes, but I hardly noticed what I was wearing once we hit the pavement. It was the best two-mile bike ride of my life.—***Jo Piazza***

Jo Piazza is the managing editor for Yahoo! Travel and the author of the novel The Knockoff *with Lucy Sykes.*



RIDE WITH SOMEONE NEW (WITHOUT BEING A WEIRDO)

DO ▹ Have a friend set you up. This can work even if the acquaintance-in-common isn't a rider. ▹ Go on a shop ride. Strike up a conversation. Meet someone compatible? Ask if they'd like to go for another ride that week. ▹ Post a question about area rides on a club's Facebook page. You'll probably be directed to the group's ride schedule, but you might snag an impromptu outing, too.

DON'T ▹ Ask riders getting a preride snack at the café if you can join them. ▹ Stalk a stranger on Strava. ▹ Linger outside the shop with your bike hoping that someone will ask you to ride.—*Brian Fiske*



GO DOWN A WATERSLIDE IN KIT.
BONUS:
STRAVA IT

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINA GANDOLFO

WE DARE YOU!



BREAK THE RULES

An open letter to the late Kittie Knox:

There's something about riding a bike—the freshness of the breeze against my skin, the undisturbed connection with the road—that feels so free and easy.

It was never free and easy for you. But you did it anyway. And that's why everyone should know your story: Born to a free Black father and white mother in Boston in 1874, when cycling was bursting out of its infancy, you fell in love with it. However, a woman—one of mixed race, no less—had no business on a bicycle. People wanted you to know your place, to focus on being a seamstress, but you refused to be limited. Rejecting women's tricycles, you insisted on riding a man's two-wheeled bike, and designed your own pantaloons for riding instead of the standard cumbersome skirts.

In 1894, the year after you joined the League of American Wheelmen, the national organization voted to become whites-only (a stipulation that wasn't officially reversed until 1999). In the face of segregation and discrimination, you persevered. When I learned that you regularly completed century rides and finished near the front of the pack at coed races, I practically pumped my fist in the air. You even showed up at the League's big annual meeting in Asbury Park, New Jersey, in 1895, causing a scene as you showed off fancy bike turns outside the hotel and danced with a white man at the social. Despite the protests from delegates who fought to have you removed from the event, you would not stand down.

When you died of kidney disease, at just 26 years old, the fight was long from won. Still, you had made your mark. You pieced together your own convention, pursuing joy despite the barriers. This is how a pioneer behaves: moving forward, regardless.

And for all of it, I thank you. We—the outsiders, the marginalized, the dismissed—we thank you for riding against the color bar; for asserting your right to fun, community, and exhilaration; for broadening the boundaries, clearing a path for other women of color like me to chase our joy, pedaling on our own terms.***—Nicole Blades***

Nicole Blades is a novelist and freelance journalist who writes about motherhood, identity, and culture. Her second novel, The Thunder Beneath Us *(Kensington), will be published in November 2016.*



Courtesy Smithonian Library



SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

HIRE A COACH

He or she can help you recognize times when you need to push harder or recover more—two things that a lot of riders get wrong.

GET HYPNOTIZED

We laughed at first too, but after three hypnosis sessions, BICYCLING staff writer and mountain biker Molly Hurford is clearing more rocks and logs than ever. "My skills were there; I was just paralyzed by fear."

ENLIST A CONCIERGE

Entrepreneurial riders in bike-crazy cities such as San Francisco and Portland, Oregon, offer private tours and concierge services for traveling cyclists. The Domestique, who operates in New York and Southern California, provides everything except shoes and clothing; his prices start at $290.—*B.F.*

TAKE OUR 21-DAY #RIDESTREAK CHALLENGE!
VISIT BICYCLING.COM/RIDESTREAK.

START A RIDE STREAK



When I turned 40 in 1993, I knew I'd never make it as a pro cyclist, but I still wanted to do something extraordinary on two wheels. I was also tired of feeling stale after days off the bike. I decided to try riding every day for at least an hour. I knew it wouldn't be easy, but I believe there's a natural human desire to keep something going.

After about 1,000 days, I felt a strong responsibility to maintain the habit. As I write this, I've completed my 7,964th consecutive ride (trainer sessions are allowed) and been streaking for nearly 22 years. In 2011, I even had my 15 minutes of fame on AT&T's U-verse Sports channel.

I don't let life get in the way. I get the stomach flu, I've been laid off, I've had hernia surgery. But I always make my daily ride the highest priority. (Bonus: I get sick a lot less than I did before the streak.) I travel with a Bike Friday folding bicycle, or beg/borrow/rent bikes when I'm on the road.

Along the way, I've had to find new ways to motivate myself: I'll listen to audio books, or upgrade components, or set goals like competing in masters road racing. I can't imagine a day without a bike ride.

When people ask about the streak, I tell them that it's not any tougher than brushing your teeth every day. The truth is, after spending a third of my life streaking, I'm not so much concerned about how to keep it going, I'm starting to worry whether I'll be able to stop.—***Jim Langley***

Jim Langley is the author of Your Home Bicycle Workshop. *He was BICYCLING's technical editor from 1989 to 1999.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID BRACETTY




"SURE, I'LL HELP YOU MOVE."
PHLCX
RALEIGH

WE DARE YOU!

BUILD A CYCLING COMMUNITY



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINA GANDOLFO

The Ovarian Psycos Cycles began in 2011 to promote friendships, healthy exercise habits, and leadership skills among womxn* of color. We are headquartered in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles, and lead rides each month during the full moon (called Luna Rides) to provide a safe environment for gender-nonconforming, two-spirited, cis-, trans-, and queer womxn to be on their bikes after dark. No rider is left behind.

Most rides include a workshop or discussion on topics such as street harassment and bike safety. Riders share personal stories, reminding us that we all face similar forms of oppression as womxn and people of color. We have learned how depression and addiction are rampant in our communities. Many of us come from homes in which a "respectable lady" does not go bike riding at night. But we encourage each other to continue. For some of us, the bike is our only reliable form of transportation.

We also ride for the joy of it! There is nothing like riding down a steep hill with people you trust. Being part of a group has helped our members cope with traumas and discover new careers. We have seen extremely shy cyclists bloom into outspoken advocates. OPC has allowed us to grow not only as cyclists, but also as friends, sisters, allies, and community members, and we dare cyclists everywhere to ride their bikes in order to heal, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

—Evelyn Martinez and Joan Zamora, members since 2012 and 2013

**This spelling is a way of reclaiming the word from a patriarchal and cis-centric society.*





Craig Cannon

STRIP DOWN

PEDAL NUDE

"It can be nerve-racking, but there are 2,000 supportive people out there with you. It's not judgmental or sexualized at all. It's a really fun and open experience. You feel embraced by the city."—Maria Serrahima, 32, lead organizer of Philadelphia's Naked Bike Ride for 2016 (date TBD this spring). Her day job is in finance.

RIDE ONE GEAR

"On a singlespeed, you just ride," says Angus Edmond of Copenhagen, Denmark, who won the 2015 Single Speed World Championships. "You don't have to think about what gear you should be in. It clears your mind."

DITCH THE DEVICES

Without a screen to look at, watts to chart, or even a KOM to catch, what are you left with? Nothing but the ride itself. Beautiful.—*B.F.*

CLIMB MOUNT EVEREST



Picture the longest hill you've ever ridden. Now imagine doing laps of it until you've climbed the equivalent of Mt. Everest (29,029 feet). "Everesting" was conceived by a group of Australian recreational cyclists called the Hells 500.

I started road biking last year and immediately found myself drawn to climbs. They put me into a meditative state. I love riding big ascents for the first time, not knowing what's around the corner. Last June, when I learned that riders around the world were posting their Everesting attempts online (everesting.cc) I put one on my calendar, two weeks out.

I picked a 2.2-kilometer stretch of road in Tilden Regional Park near Berkeley, California, and rode a steel Sycip Roadster that I'd bought used. I subsisted on water and a pizza that I left in my car. When I hit about 11,000 feet of elevation gain, 29,000 still felt far away, and I'd already been riding for hours. But when I hit 18,000, I knew I could make it.

The monotony of doing the same climb again and again allowed me to stop thinking. I did listen to music, often '80s yacht rock—the Doobie Brothers, Hall & Oates—because it makes me laugh.

After I finished, I wanted more. In August I broke the world record for most feet climbed in 48 hours, ascending 95,623 feet. As I write this, I'm in Vietnam biking from Saigon to Hanoi.

If you're prepping for a big day of climbing, here are a few tips. First, spin, spin, spin. I ride a 50/34 crankset with an 11-32 cassette. Also, eat real food. Besides pizza, I love roasted fingerling potatoes rolled in sea salt, grated parmesan, and olive oil. But if I could impart nothing else to you, it'd be this: Have fun.—***Craig Cannon***

Craig Cannon organizes Comedy Hack Day and cohosts the podcast Salt of the Earth.

WE DARE YOU!

GO BIKEPACKING



Bikepacking is my favorite way to spend a weekend. After five desk-bound days, heading off on a self-supported backcountry adventure clears my head. Stress and cell reception fade away as I pedal into the forest. My senses sharpen and time slows down. I sleep best after a long day on the bike, curled up in my sleeping bag, taking deep breaths of mountain air.

Last year I founded the all-female Komorebi Cycling Team to inspire more cyclists to explore the backcountry by bike. In addition to sharing tips on packing, trailside repair, and more on our website, we work together to plan and lead trips, and invite other riders to join us. For some of them, it's their first off-road riding experience. We've challenged ourselves on sustained unpaved climbs that take hours to crest, then lingered lazily at the expansive views from the summits, sharing snacks and sips of whiskey.

We've crossed through a rocky river with glacier headwaters and stuffed ourselves on fresh huckleberries picked from alpine meadows. And we're back in the office on Monday morning.

Whether you're looking for a technical challenge or seeking a peaceful ride away from the bustle of the city, you can find it on a bikepacking trip. Start small and build up to bigger adventures. Look for nearby rails-to-trails systems, or state parks and national recreation areas that might have unpaved service roads. Be sure to reference a topographic map so you know the elevation profile. Primitive camping is free in national forests and grasslands. Bikes outfitted with tires at least 2 inches wide will be the most comfortable to ride on gravel and rocky terrain. And as with any type of cycling, the more you practice, the easier (and more fun) bikepacking becomes.

—Jocelyn Gaudi

Jocelyn Gaudi is the marketing manager at Portland Design Works in Portland, Oregon. She shares tips for bikepacking at ***BICYCLING.com/komorebi.***



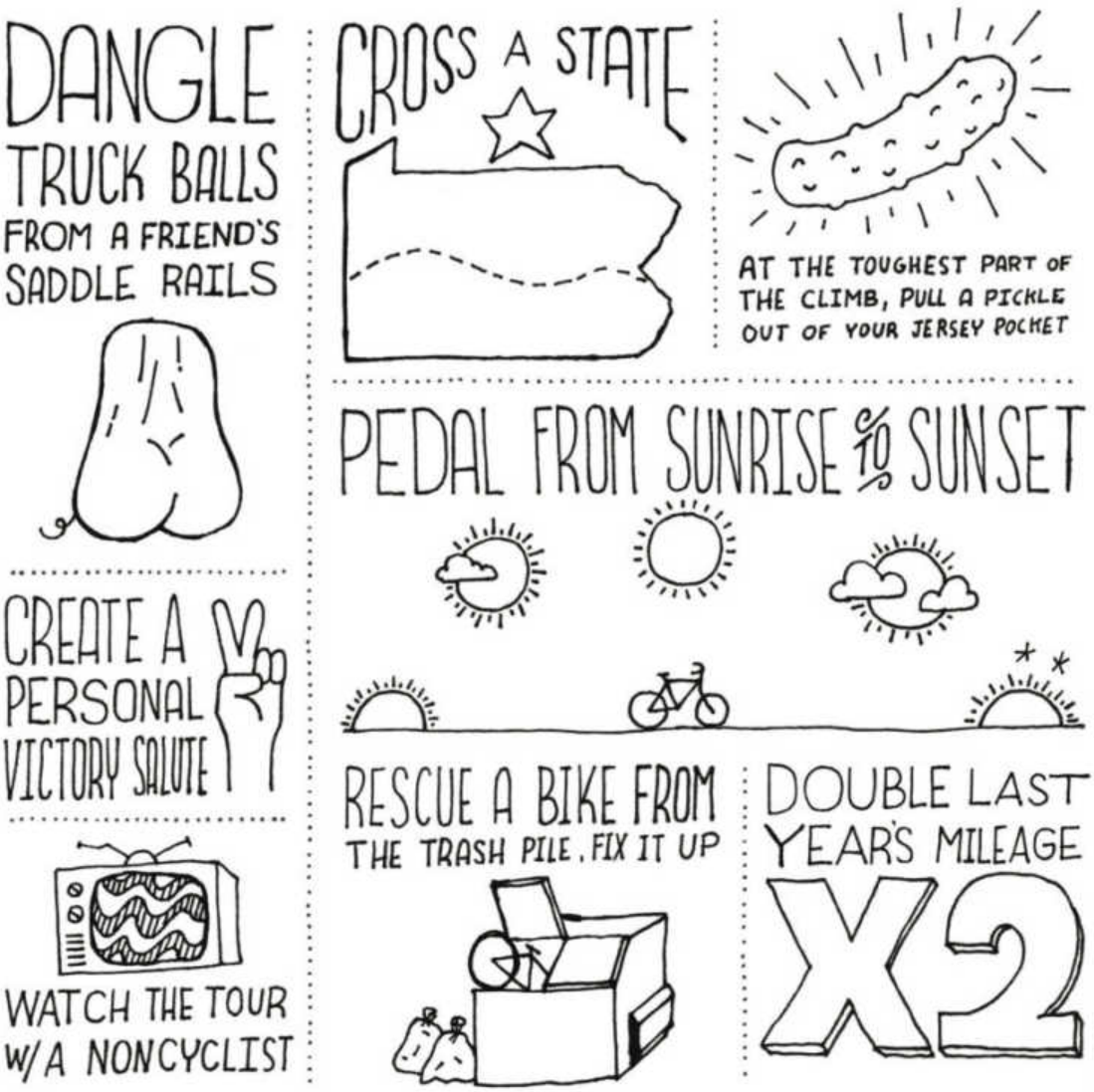
PERFECT YOUR SKID

LEAN FORWARD
The more of your body weight that's over the front of the bike, the less traction you have in the rear, so the skid will last longer, says Optum Pro Cycling racer Jesse Anthony. Square your torso to the direction you want to go.

LOCK THE REAR BRAKE
Grab it hard, don't ease into it, says Anthony. Once you get good at sliding, practice shifting your hips to fishtail back and forth.

WHIP IT GOOD
As your skills advance, try swinging the back of the bike around at the end of the skid. Be ready to unclip in case you lose your balance—or to get a leg out so you can really fling that back end. "People worry that skidding wears through tires too fast," says Anthony. "But skidding like a kid puts a smile on your face."—*B.F.*

Jocelyn Gaudi



PUT ON EXTRA WEIGHT

TO GET FASTER
Build muscle to help you pedal more powerfully—and sculpt your quads—by hitting the leg-press machine two to three times a week. Start with a weight that lets you maintain proper form through three sets of eight to 10 reps.

ON A BIKE TOUR
The Bottega Gran Fondo (April 22–24) mixes rides through California's Napa Valley with three days of spandex-busting indulgence: "chef stops" along each route, cooking demos, winery tours, and four-course meals prepared by Food Network star Michael Chiarello.

TO MAKE YOUR BIKE COOLER
The Owl Cage from Portland Design Works weighs 67g, more than twice as much as most carbon-fiber cages—and looks like something a member of the Justice League would have on his flying rocket cycle.—*B.F.*

MAKE A STATEMENT



Danny Gamboa

The ghost bike movement started in 2003 when a St. Louis cyclist witnessed a car-bike crash and later marked the site with a bike he'd painted white. Grassroots groups around the world make ghost bikes to honor fallen cyclists and boost public awareness of the increasing number of people riding for transportation.

The first installation I attended was a tribute to a triathlete, Amine Britel. In 2011 he was killed in Newport Beach, California, by a driver who was under the influence and texting. It could just as easily have been me killed, or one of my friends. I captured the installation in photographs and video.

Now I volunteer with the nonprofit Ghost Bikes of California, which creates memorials from San Francisco to San Diego. Our goal is to be put out of business. Some of our volunteers have lost a loved one to a bike crash.

Anthony Navarro lost his six-year-old son, Anthony, on Thanksgiving Day four years ago. The boy was struck by a motorist while riding his bike outside his house. I used my son's outgrown bike for Anthony's memorial—that was really hard. Navarro has since helped to place more than 50 ghost bikes in Ventura and Los Angeles Counties. Cyclists are a community and when one is killed, we all suffer.
—Danny Gamboa

Danny Gamboa is a Chicano artist with a focus on photography, performance art, and social change documentaries, and the director of the bike-advocacy organization Empact Communities.













BY CHRIS KLIBOWITZ // PHOTOGRAPHY BY MITCH MANDEL

PATCHES!

STEEPED IN TRADITION, CYCLING'S LATEST MUST-HAVE KEEPSAKE MAKES EVERYTHING IT TOUCHES COOLER.

































Three years ago, Todd Siegle was out for a spin near his Orlando, Florida, home when a rider he didn't know jumped into his slipstream then hung on behind him, wordless, for miles. A keen observer of cycling culture who founded the Fixed Fight alleycat race in St. Petersburg, Florida, in 2007, Siegle decided he wanted to commemorate the odd feeling of being wheelsucked. He envisioned a "Death to Suckers" icon, featuring a cyclist, with X'ed-out eyes, sucking on a lollipop that resembled a bike wheel.

Siegle is a thoroughly modern, 37-year-old financial analyst who rides a carbon fiber Boardman and was an early adopter of Strava (though he admits his upload rate is "somewhat shameful"). But when it came time to turn his wheelsucker idea into something he could pass around to his friends, he chose to do so with a technology that was last popular before he even learned to ride a bike—a cloth patch.

From individuals like Siegle, to businesses as diverse as Rapha and Golden Saddle Cyclery, the tastemakers who help define what is desirable in cycling have resurrected this humble, old-fashioned emblem.

Starting in the early 1970s and lasting through the 1980s, the patch was cycling's badge of honor, usually indicating membership in a local club or to show that you'd completed a century or a tour. One of the earliest documented appearances came in 1973, when two staffers from the *Des Moines Register* who'd completed the first RAGBRAI (The *Register*'s Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa) sent patches to the 114 people who finished the ride. (Bucking the rise and fall of the patch's popularity in the time since then, the organizers have given them out every year.)

Of course, patches weren't big only among cyclists. The Chicago Embroidery Company was founded in 1890 and has manufactured for some of the largest patch users—about 117.6 million for the Boy and Girl Scouts alone, for instance. President Rob Faurot traces the patch's prevalence to a need to outfit the 16 million US soldiers who enlisted during World War II, a push that kept up through the Korean and Vietnam wars, then came home with the soldiers as they found civilian jobs as police, firemen, and repairmen. As is common in fashion, workwear became an inspiration for self-expression, and beginning in the '60s the patch exploded in popularity—until cheaper, quicker, direct-on-clothing automated embroidery took over. This coincided with the rise of digital production that made custom stickers affordable, and by the late 1980s, the cycling patch was all but extinct.

Stevil Kinevil, proprietor of the bicycling-culture blog *All Hail The Black Market*, says, "I've loved stickers since my days as a little skate grom in 1982. They were like a form of commerce, as well as just generally a fun thing to collect. If stickers are commerce, however, patches have proven to be a 401k."

Indeed, like the dollar, a sticker doesn't seem to go far these days. Since 2010, Rapha has offered patches for completing its ride challenges, such as the Festive 500. Explains Rapha's communications director, Chris DiStefano: "The decision to offer patches—or 'roundels' as they say in the UK—was not for nostalgia but to offer something that is meaningful and can be applied to a jersey, jacket, or bag."

Siegle echoes that notion. "Death to Suckers" proved so popular that he opened an online shop, Spoking Fun, and in the past three years has sold more than 10,000 patches in 60-plus designs—many of them with inspirational messages, such as another early creation of his that reads, *We All Suffer—Keep Going.* Which is just what he—and other patch makers—plan to do. "Now that we've seen what can be done with the medium," he says, "there's no turning back."

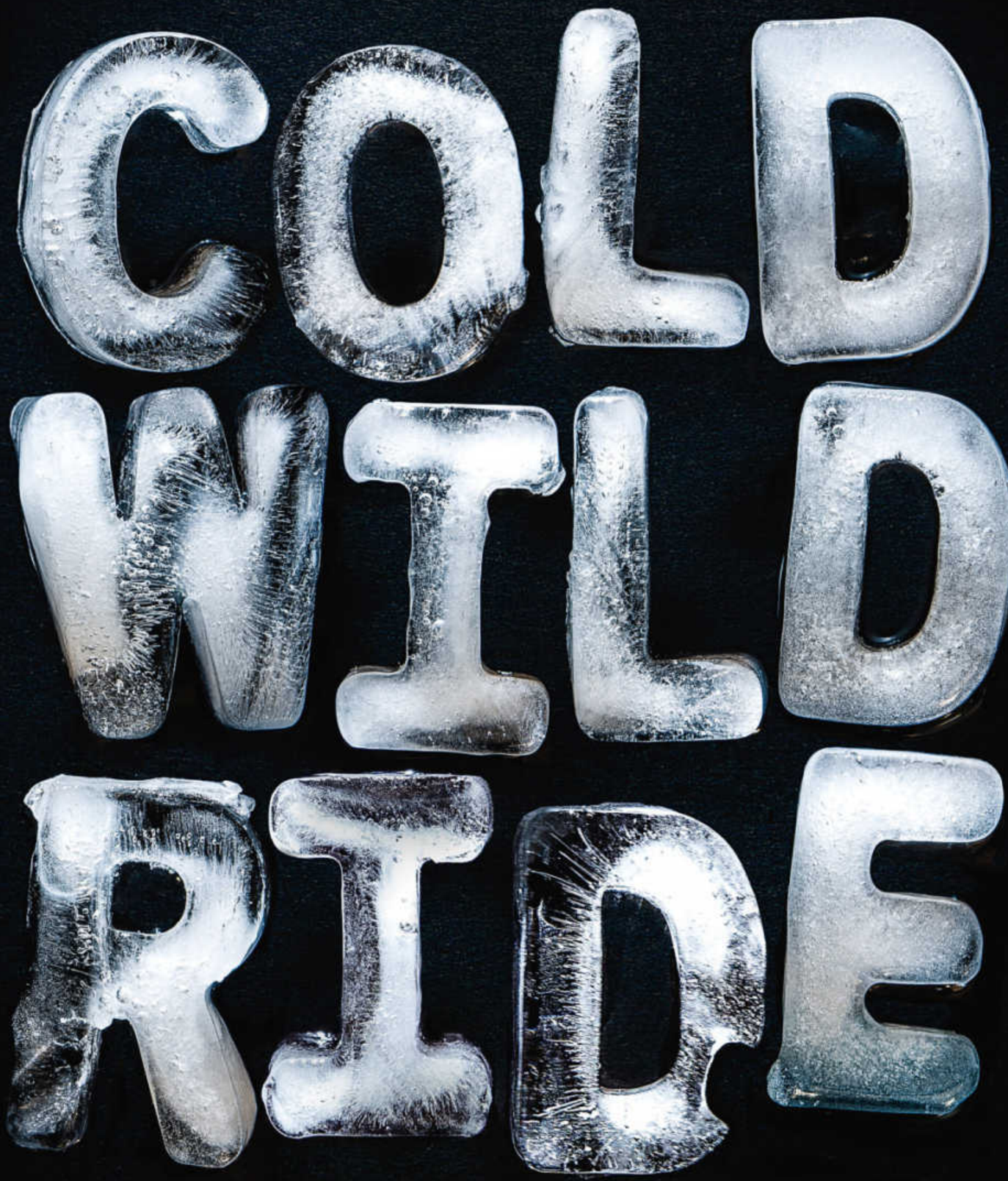

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BY **TRACY ROSS** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CARL BATTREALL**



WHEN CALAMITY AND MISADVENTURE THREATEN TO DERAIL HER CHANCE AT FAT-BIKE GLORY, SHE DISCOVERS THAT CHOOSING TO LOSE IS THE ULTIMATE VICTORY.



Triumphant at the finish, the author finds that hot soup melts away memories of cold.



BY THE TIME I THINK TO EAT THE PB&J SANDWICHES STUFFED IN MY SPORTS BRA, THE WINDCHILL HAS TURNED THEM TO ROCKS.

At this point, I am pushing my bike across an ice-locked lake. Sporadic markers that read "Iditasport" tell me I'm on the trail, yet I can barely make them out because my eyelashes keep sticking together. A vision flashes in my mind, of a woman I'd heard about whose eyeballs had frozen during a race in Alaska. They'd apparently swelled to the size of prunes, causing her temporary blindness.

Because her race had been 350 miles while mine is just 100 kilometers, I feel like a baby even thinking things could get that dire. Then again, I've already broken a chain, lost my way, and run out of water. My fingers are waxy, even in puffy handlebar mitts; my toes wooden in their insulated, lug-soled boots. Even my protective layer of beer fat feels as cold and clammy as...fat.

My one consolation is that the 100K is supposed to be an out-and-back, which puts the turnaround (in a place fittingly called Dismal Swamp) at about 31 miles. But the turnaround is proving just as elusive as the warmth I was told I can generate if I keep pumping my thighs.

Three hours, maybe four, ago, I passed the walkers (crazy people doing the race on foot) and asked how far they thought we'd traveled. They'd looked at their pedometers and answered, "We just hit a marathon!"

One hour, maybe two, ago, I asked the race leader (already on her way back) how far it was to the checkpoint. "Across the lake?" she shouted. "I don't know! Six miles?"

What felt like an hour later, I ran into Seth and Adam, two oil riggers from the North Slope, also on their return. I must have looked pallid, because before I opened my mouth, they shouted, "You're doing great! Keep going! Just *six more miles*!"

I smiled until they passed, then turned and stared at their anoraks.

The wind kicks up, at least a knot.

From inside my protective layer, my stomach grumbles. I remember the sandwiches and take a frozen bite, the cold electrocuting a filling.

IT WAS IN ALASKA, as a twentysomething, that I fell in love with biking.

First in McCarthy, a remote town in 13-million-acre Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, and later as a student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In McCarthy, I spent a summer riding between a pizza-slinging gig and a creaking glacier. In Fairbanks, I pedaled between the university and my job at a dog-mushing kennel.

I felt the breath of the Arctic intimately because of the proximity bike riding put me to bears browsing rose hips along the Kennicott Road, to moose stumbling among shopping carts in the Fred Meyer parking lot, to car exhaust hanging in edible clouds along Old Steese Highway, and to the Northern Lights, pulsing across the seemingly endless Alaskan winter night.

Riding in town made me want to ride out of town, and I stared at snow-packed dog-mushing trails fanning for thousands of miles and wondered how I could ride them. This was before fat bikes came along with their bulbous, treaded tires made for snow, and I was more of a cross-country skier in those days anyway. So I schussed in the inky dark, seeing things I knew few other people had ever witnessed. Like cold *so* cold it froze my spit, crystalline air that heightened the glow of the cosmos, and an inner and outer strength that grew in proportion to how many times I skied alone, in the dark, in subzero temperatures. I lived, biked, and skied in Alaska until the late 1990s, before moving to Colorado.

Roughly 20 years later, after adventures all over the world, I still wanted to go back to Alaska. All along I'd dreamed of riding those trails. The nearest I'd come was following from afar the evolution of the Iditasport, a multiday race that today lures both seasoned and newbie riders, runners, and Nordic skiers, with distances of 100 kilometers and 225

miles. Iditasport has morphed multiple times over three decades, and is now in the capable hands of Alaskan-born Billy Koitzsch.

Billy, 43, grew up in Nome and Fairbanks and saw the first long-distance winter cyclists push their bikes beneath the sign that welcomes mushers to the finish in the 1,000-plus-mile Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. He rode, guided, and raced, and eventually froze several toes during a 350-mile winter-biking epic. A doctor amputated, but Billy got back on his bike, and the following year rode 2,000 miles across dead-of-winter Alaska.

Intrigued, I called Billy.

Our conversation reflected the inner workings of a guy who likes to spend dozens of days at a time riding through nature's meat locker. "Road riding is fine," he said, "but winter cycling gives you something...you gotta know how to pedal, but you also have to be a survivalist." When I told him of my wish, he asked only, "How fit are you?"

"I felt the breath of the Arctic intimately because of the proximity bike riding put me to bears along the Kennicott Road."

I responded that I'd skate-skied all winter (at 9,000 feet), but I was honest about the bike: "I haven't ridden since October."

Billy paused for a second, thinking. I thought he'd tell me to rush out, get a fat bike, and start logging miles until race day in February. Instead he chuckled and said, "I guess the only thing I'd worry about is how your ass is gonna feel after 100K."

FOUR WEEKS LATER, I landed in Anchorage. I took my bike, a Specialized Fatboy Expert, to outfitter Eric Parsons of Revelate Designs. He fitted it with bags in every shape on the geometric spectrum, adding unfortunate but necessary weight to the 30-pound frame. I then took it for a spin through the city.

It was midday on a Thursday or I probably would have seen more riders. Since 2011, Alaska winter biking has exploded. Bill Fleming, a former co-owner of Anchorage's 9:ZERO:7 Bikes, calls Anchorage one of the most vibrant winter cycling communities in the country, one in which men, women, and children show up for weekend, weekday, and after-work rides. In deepest winter, that far north, it starts getting dark at 3 p.m. But these hard-core cyclists, some of whom get their fat bikes at the Anchorage Walmart, are crazy for riding.

Yet, even in the light of day, the cold was a menace. I picked up the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail and spun through a park with kids ice-skating on a pond, over a bridge spanning a frozen slough, and to the edge of sweeping, make-you-cry pretty Cook Inlet, with ridiculous views of Mt. Iliamna, Mt. Redoubt, and in the far-and-hazy away, Denali. It was 2:30 p.m. and already the sunset was turning the world cotton-candy pink.

The air, the trail, and bald eagles perched on trees made me want to keep going despite my toes, which felt like slowly freezing sausage links. But in a few hours all Iditasport entrants were to meet at a warehouse on Anchorage's outskirts. We'd check in, show our mandatory gear, and sit through a talk from local safety expert Brian Horner, who had done rescue patrol on Denali. Billy hired



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EVOLUTION OF IDITASPORT AT **BICYCLING.COM/IDITASPORTHISTORY.**



HOW TO CRUSH THE COLD

PLAN YOUR LAYERS. As you might surmise, I did not think this through very well. How I should have done it: lightweight wool or synthetic base layer, midweight insulated second layer, windshell outer layer. Puffy coat stowed for stops and peace of mind.

HANDLEBAR MITTS—FTW! These neoprene or down-insulated bar-end covers will save your digits. You still wear gloves, but you can stuff the mitts with hand warmers, too. I like Revelate Designs Williwaw Pogies ($95).

RELEASE SOME AIR. Although recommended pressure on fat-bike tires is already low (I started out at 4 to 5 psi), when the snow got granular, I let out even more for better grip.

MOVE DELIBERATELY. Muscles get tight faster in freezing temps. To avoid injury, race organizer, Billy Koitzsch, advised us to take care especially during mounts and dismounts.

KEEP NUTRITION EDIBLE. Choose layers with pockets that can hold food. CamelBak makes a base-layer vest with a built-in hydration reservoir. Route the tube under your arm for extra heat. —T.R.





him, it seemed, to scare some practical knowledge into me and the 35 other riders about how to stay alive on a bike at –20°F.

"We're here to talk about the cold," Horner said, and proceeded to elucidate all the ways freezing weather could seriously eff us. Hypothermia was one; even bigger, frostbite. He showed pictures of feet that had frozen past the point of rewarming. One guy's toes resembled tarry wads of black licorice. Another's had swelled like water balloons. Horner said the best way to avoid either fate was to wear socks wrapped in bags topped by shoes and insulated overboots. As for hands, we were to avoid touching anything metal unless we had gloves on, because each contact "freezes and damages cells." Then he added, "So long as you don't sweat, you'll stay warm enough. But sweat and get cold out there, and it's incredibly hard to warm up."

I tuned out when he started focusing on the best food choices for the 225-milers, which could explain why I missed this crucial announcement: Billy had rerouted the 100K course slightly, and it was no longer an exact out-and-back as I had imagined.

It's also entirely possible that I missed this because I was too busy confessing to Billy's wife and race co-organizer, Erica, my one concern greater than the cold: For as much outdoor adventuring as I've done, I have trouble reading maps. I explained to Erica that though I'd looked at the course map online, it didn't offer much...texture. Nor did I bring a GPS (hey, it wasn't on the mandatory gear list). But Erica was the picture of calm, collected, wife-of-race-director encouragement.

"Oh, my gosh," she gushed. "You'll be *fine* on the 100K! I know, because I wanded it *personally*. Seriously, just follow the bright blue wands that say Iditasport. But first let's get a credit card number in case you do need a rescue."

RACE MORNING DAWNS bright and biting. All 35 long- and short-distance riders meet in the parking lot of the Knik Museum and Mushers Hall of Fame. The 225-milers will take off first, and they make last-minute tweaks to their bikes. I'm nervous, but also excited. And another, strange thought wells inside me: Of the 18 racers doing the 100K, only eight are women—which means I could podium.

I do this thing in race-like situations in which I predict another athlete's ability to outperform me based solely on her appearance. Karin Johnson has brought her extended family—including grandparents. Her friend, in chest-length braids, giggles nervously beside her. A quiet young woman in little more than a windbreaker says, "My boots are basically the ones I wear to work." That leaves only four women who can possibly crush me.

Billy calls the 100K'ers to the start. I lug the Fatboy to the back of the pack and then shrug-smiling, begin steadily edging it forward. At, "Go!" I stand and lean all of my weight into the 'boy's flat, slippery pedals.

I surge forward until...the sickening clunk of my chain snapping. As I fumble through my bags, it dawns on me that, in the frenzy of preparing for the cold, I have forgotten a chain tool. I must have let out a mournful cry, because from a couple of riders back, Karin shouts, "Don't worry!" Her husband is back at HQ prepared to help. In 15 minutes, I am all fixed up and full of hope. But my joy lasts just seconds as I realize I am now trailing all of the riders. In my hubris, I'd imagined crushing several—dozens. Fear zings my spine as I ponder riding alone for the next 62 miles.

"As I fumble through my bags, it dawns on me that, in the frenzy of preparing for the cold, I have forgotten a chain tool."

I begin to sprint, picking people off as we bank tiny berms in a dingy alder forest. Soon I come to the water station at mile 10, and by the time I've "raced" everyone there, I am drenched in sweat. I strip off my down coat, lose my midlayer and hat. My back and head steam as I chomp cookies and guzzle all of my water. I still haven't fully grasped that the course has been rerouted and, thinking that one bottle will sustain me (what with the rest stop at mile 10 and the turnaround just 20 miles later), I gleefully finish the near-frozen sips. I then refill, neglecting to comprehend that the "insulated" carrier, clearly designed by someone who has never done Iditasport, will fail to keep my water wet.

My hair and sweat are now turning to ice, a stern reminder to heed Horner's rule for staying warm in Alaska: Keep moving.

Soon I am alone again in the Alaskan bush. At a small river along a rolling section of trail, I see a white disk marked with blue writing and vaguely remember Billy saying something about a turn. But so intent am I on staying in front that I crank past the humble signage. I am still cranking when twinges of fear hit me mixed with the faint gnaw of hunger. But the light is that cotton-candy pink, CONTINUED ON P. 94



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CRANKBROTHERS Y16

Because you deserve a better multi-tool BY GLORIA LIU

Photography by **JONATHAN PUSHNIK**



MY SISTER GAVE ME MY first multi-tool for Christmas six years ago. It was a Topeak Alien II with 26 functions including a bottle opener and pocketknife. Even after I'd come into possession of other multi-tools, the Alien II remained my trusty companion. I carried it everywhere, because chances were, it had the tool I needed.

But it was still a multi-tool, and multi-tools have their limitations. They can be clumsy to hold and maneuver in tight spaces. And if you really need to muscle something, you're probably SOL.

Enter the Crankbrothers y16: proper Y tools and more, in a portable package. A plastic carrying case holds two 6150 chromoly steel Y tools back-to-back, snugged together magnetically. One has the bits you'll need most often: 4mm, 5mm, and 6mm hex wrenches. The other has an 8mm hex, a T10 torx driver, and a socket to hold the six other zinc-plated tool heads that live in the carrying case, including Phillips- and flat-head screwdrivers. There's also a CO_2 inflator and a chain tool.

The y16 is a little too big to carry in a jersey pocket or seat bag, but it fits well in a hydration pack, and its compact size and breadth of functionality mean I still use it more than any other multi-tool. It's become my home toolkit for the basic but frequent fiddling I do to set up test bikes; but I can also toss it in my bag for races or when I'm traveling. It's saved my butt, and those of a couple of my riding companions, several times on the trail and on the road.

One day, a friend texted me that she'd found my Alien II in her pack. I realized that I'd lent it to her weeks ago. With the y16 in my life, I never even missed my longtime favorite.

PRICE $50, WEIGHT 257g

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Scapin Anouk

Let's get Italian



I'D RATHER ride myself into the red on a punchy group ride than spin for hours on an all-day slog. But I know überlong rides make me fitter. That's why it's important to me that my bike has a double personality: fast and exciting, but also smooth enough to keep me from feeling totally wrecked after a long day. The Scapin Anouk intrigued me at first glance: Thick, chiseled fork legs and a broad top tube exuded a racy persona, while ultrathin chainstays hinted at compliance.

When I planted myself in the saddle, the Anouk felt ready to play. With a 53cm top tube for my XS tester, this bike was not shy about getting me in an aggressive position. It felt stiff under pedaling, snapping to attention when I stood out of the saddle to close down gaps on fast group rides. Slight movements on my part translated almost immediately, and I appreciated that sharp maneuverability on twisty roads and in tight packs. However, this also meant the handling demanded a bit of attention, especially on descents.

On rough roads, the bike's front end transmits some chatter to the handlebar without apology. But overall, the ride is smooth, and thanks to both its speed and ability to take the sting out of the road, the Anouk left me feeling less tired than I should have been for my day's mileage. I looked at my Garmin in shock after one ride to find that I had just finished 50 miles—it felt like 30. That beat-up feeling I've experienced on harsher-riding bikes was nowhere to be found.

My tester came with light and stiff Xentis Squad 25 carbon wheels, and the 14.6-pound package made climbing almost pleasant, helping me gain my first local Strava QOM. Once I headed down the other side of the mountain, however, I held back—it felt like the SRAM Force 22 brakes required a massive effort to stop when paired with these particular rims. But in the US, the Anouk comes in 14 parts packages, with several wheelset options for each. And with builds starting at $2,495, the Anouk nails an unusual sweet spot between availability and exclusivity—I can afford one, but it's still likely I'll be the only rider on my block to have one.—TAYLOR ROJEK

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Italian brand that's recently become available again in the US ■ Easy to customize: more than 100 potential build combinations starting at $2,495; frameset for $1,875

PRICE $4,899, as tested
WEIGHT 14.6 lb. (XS)

Photograph by MATT RAINEY

MyOwn PERFECT SADDLE

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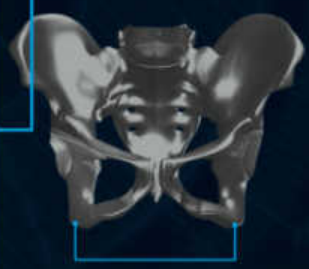
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Yeti SB4.5c

Big wheels and bitchin' suspension





WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

No front derailleur or chain guide accommodation means 1x drivetrain only ■ Builds range from $6,899 for SRAM X01 and DT Swiss wheels to $10,499 for Shimano XTR with Enve wheels ■ Four sizes (S to XL) and two colors: bright green and flat black ■ Five-year warranty ■ One bottle cage mount under the down tube

THERE WAS A LOT OF anticipation for the Yeti 4.5c. The model it replaced—the SB95—was one of our favorites. But more important, this is the first 29er to incorporate Yeti's unique Switch Infinity suspension design.

The signature feature of Switch Infinity is a link above the bottom bracket that slides up and down (or, as Yeti's engineers say, "translates") on a pair of shafts. Yeti designers claim this allows them to control the wheel path and shock rate in ways a rotating link cannot, and that the way the link moves—vertically—is more efficient, too.

This sounds like the usual suspension design hype. But the first two 27.5-inch-wheeled Switch Infinity models—the five-inch-travel SB5c trail bike and the enduro-oriented SB6c—were so exceptional that they can legitimately be labeled game-changers. And the 4.5c largely lives up to the hype, too.

With 4.5 inches (114 millimeters) of rear travel, a 140mm-travel fork, a long-ish front end, lowish bottom bracket, and slackish head angle, this bike is, like many of the new breed of short-travel trail 29ers, a mashup: more descent-capable than an XC race bike and faster uphill than a trail bike. But you can choose which personality the bike skews toward. Yeti offers two tunes of the FOX FLOAT DPS EVOL shock—XC and trail—which change its character noticeably.

With the XC-tune shock, the rear suspension is firm, noticeably progressive, and rides higher in its stroke. There's little bob and it holds the bike up well, keeping it from wallowing when you're rolling through slow-speed, ledgy terrain. It has a sporty feel that wouldn't be out of place on a pure XC race bike—which is great on smoother trails and climbs, but makes the back end start to skip around on rougher descents.

With the trail-tune shock, the suspension provides better traction and uses more of its travel more easily. The bike feels bigger in terms of travel and is more settled on rough terrain. But it also feels less crisp, less fast, and bobs more on steeper climbs.

I greatly preferred the trail tune because it made the bike feel similar to the SB5c, my favorite bike; and I think the typical 4.5c rider will as well. But the bike is versatile, capable, fun, and fast with either shock; it just depends on your preferred feel and where you usually ride. Either way, the bike can run on the downhills more than you would expect from 4.5 inches of travel, though much of this comes from the big wheels, 140mm fork, and a geometry that, like other Yetis, helps a rider feel more confident and a bike more stable. But it also calls for more attention on climbs to keep the front end from wandering, and reduces some pedal clearance.

At 437mm, chainstays are short for a 29er—even shorter than on either the SB5c or SB6c. Not only does this make the front wheel easy to loft, but it also helps the 4.5c feel less ponderous than a long, slack, and big-wheeled trail bike might ordinarily be. It rips the tight stuff well, and it's even more agile-feeling than some smaller-wheeled bikes.

With the trail tune, the 4.5c is almost an SB5c with bigger wheels. With the XC tune, the 4.5c is a near-XC bike with tremendous capability. Either way, with the benefits of 29-inch wheels, it is the most versatile and, I think, broadly appealing of Yeti's SB models, whether you're a little more XC or a little more trail.

—MATT PHILLIPS

PRICE $6,899 as tested
WEIGHT 25.8 lb. (M)

Photograph by **MITCH MANDEL**

Diamondback Podium Equipe

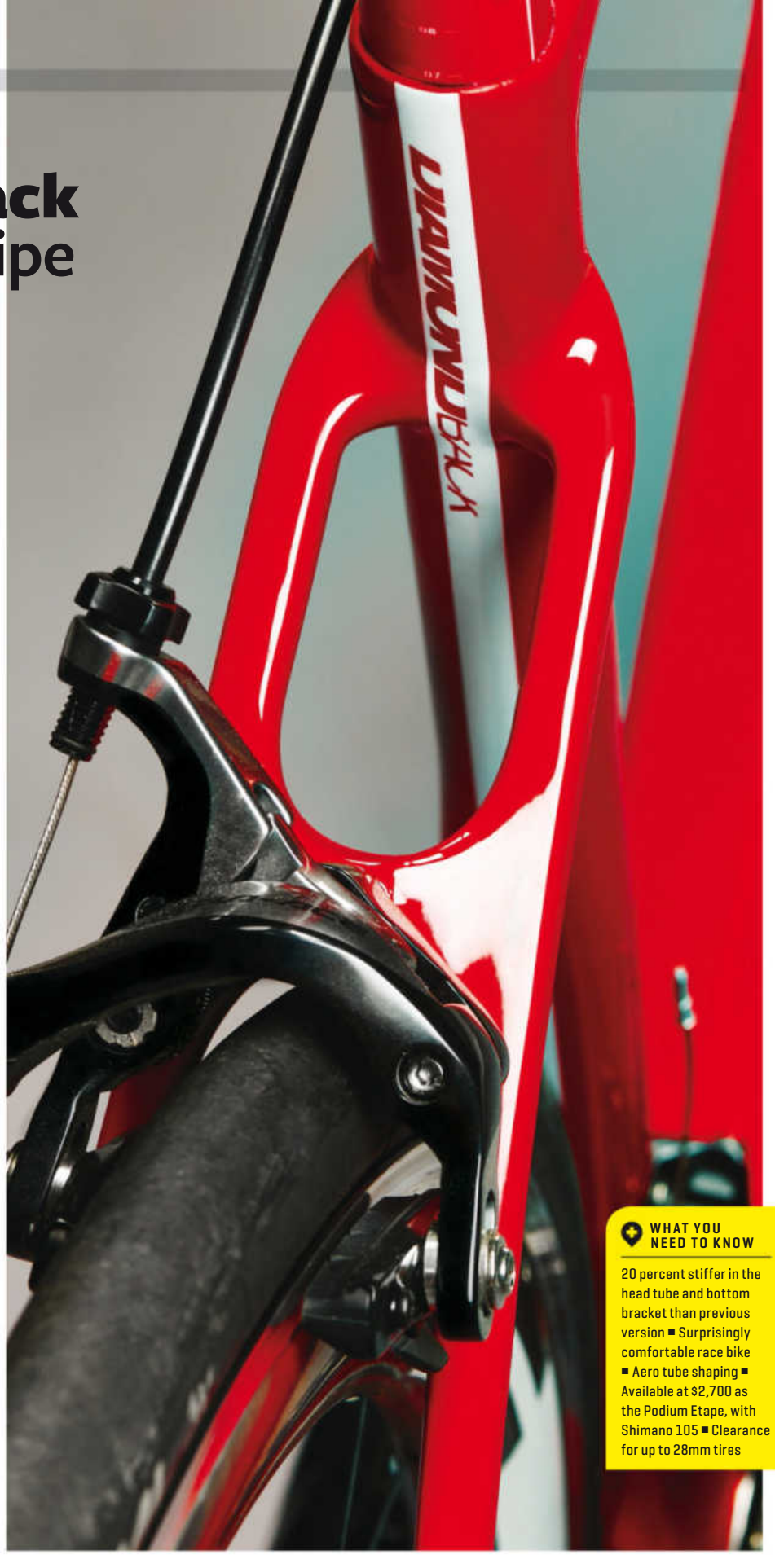
Whoosh.

WE KNOW WHAT YOU'RE thinking: A $7,500 road bike from...Diamondback? The company is best known for its BMX and mountain bikes, but it has solid pavement offerings across the price spectrum. The latest version of its flagship Podium race model includes updates such as subtle aero tube shaping, a massive front end and fork, and porting for mechanical and electronic drivetrains. Feedback from the Optum Pro Cycling p/b Kelly Benefit Strategies squad helped shape the bike.

The handling is lifted straight from the Italian road race handbook. A steady touch on the bar will reward you well, with the bike responding to small inputs quickly. It favored an over-the-bottom-bracket position when I was really driving it through challenging turns, and I found myself wanting the inside line, the tighter the better. The front wheel has a tendency to want to lift out of turns if not held in check, but that's what makes this a bike that can be pushed and pushed, then snapped upright at the moment you need to, using that same lift. One afternoon, while barreling down our local Route 100, I realized that school was letting out a half-mile away. Rather than race into the morass of cars and buses, I made a split-second detour. I pivoted with my hips, pulled back on the bar, and deftly ducked right down Buckeye Road. It's a trick mountain bikers use to change lines, and the Podium responded well to it, showing that no matter how far out of the woods this bike may be, its heritage still shapes the ride.

You get a top-notch kit for the price: a Dura-Ace mechanical drivetrain with a 53/39 chainring; a HED bar, stem, and seatpost; and fat Jet4 clinchers, boasting 21mm internal-width rims, shod in Continental Attack and Force tires. I had hoped that Diamondback could make a great road bike despite being so deeply entrenched in the dirt, and with the Podium Equipe, it did. If the company keeps this up, we'll be less and less surprised to see it selling premium road race bikes in the future.—MIKE YOZELL

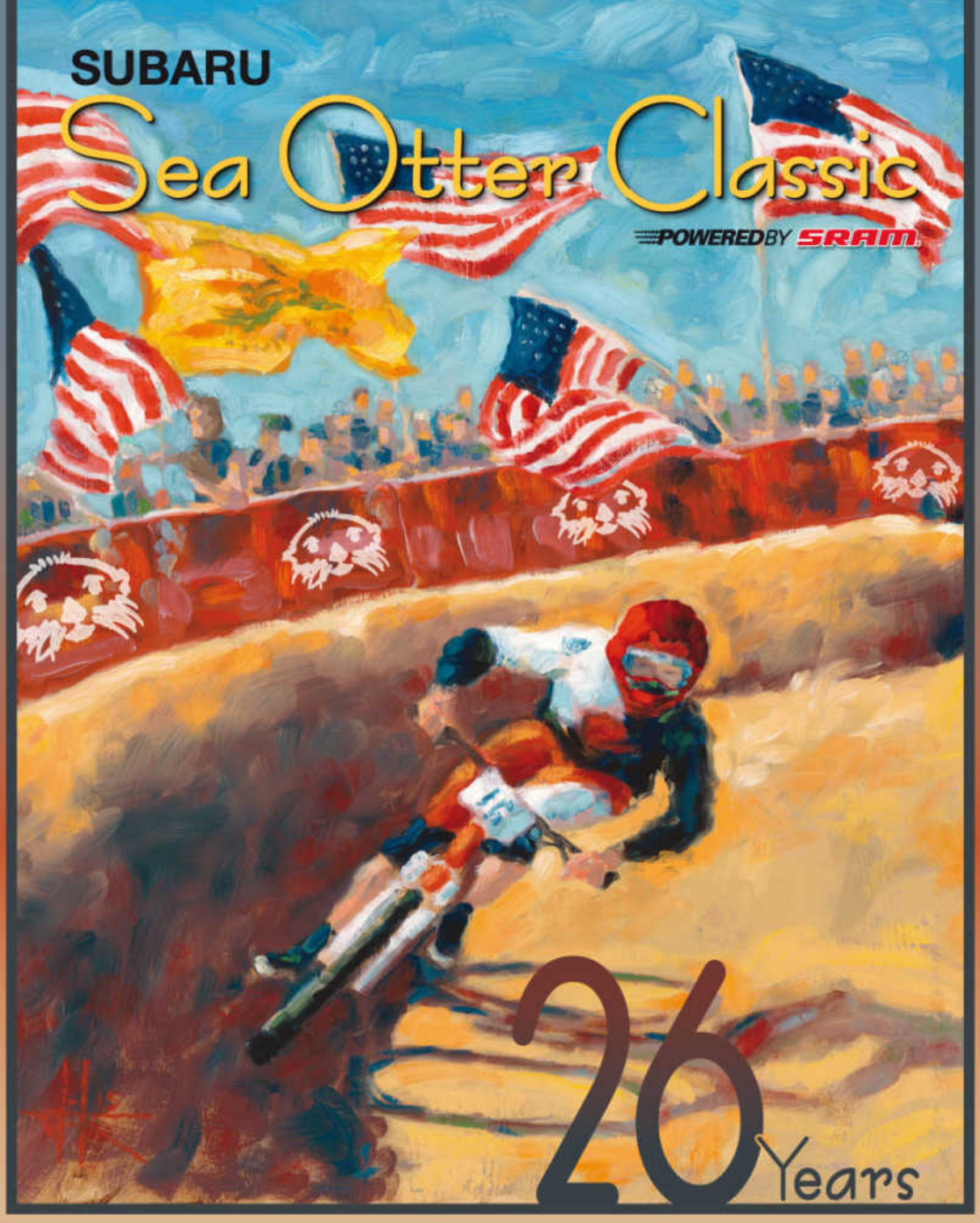
PRICE $7,500 WEIGHT 15.4 lb. (54cm)



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

20 percent stiffer in the head tube and bottom bracket than previous version ■ Surprisingly comfortable race bike ■ Aero tube shaping ■ Available at $2,700 as the Podium Etape, with Shimano 105 ■ Clearance for up to 28mm tires

Photograph by **MATT RAINEY**



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Electra Moto 3i

Ride like a hoodrat



WHEN I SAW the Moto 3i it stirred a long-lost memory of my first bike—a cream-yellow BMX cruiser with a two-speed kickback hub and 24-inch wheels. The Moto 3i conjured the image of surfing down my street with one foot on the seat and one on the crossbar: an improbable and ill-advised feat that today I find hard to believe really happened. Yet it did, as did the time we neighborhood kids decided to play Evel Knievel and jump our bikes over flames...that we set in someone's yard. (Sorry about the grass, Mrs. Ebert, but your side lawn had the slope we needed for takeoff.)

All those childhood memories come roaring back on the Moto 3i—as intended. Part cruiser, part klunker, and part BMX-style cruiser, the bike has a style that's everywhere and nowhere at once—whatever you rode as a kid, the Moto 3i somehow mirrors it. So I rode it like I rode as a kid. Every errand became an excuse to lay fat skids on the 2.1-inch-wide knobby tires, which have extra rubber that I convinced myself was there just for that purpose. Every curb lip was a jump; every banked expanse of concrete in an underpass an opportunity to flick the bike up into a wall ride. (Aside: Can we resurrect two-speed kickback hubs, please?)

This is not a practical bike of any kind. It comes in one size. It's a tank to ride up hills. The three-speed internal drivetrain is geared so high and wide that the third speed is useless for anything other than an hour record attempt. From a performance standpoint, the only thing that really gets a nod is the powerful Hayes mechanical disc brakes. Don't trouble yourself with issues like fender and rack compatibility or why there's no generator light. The Moto 3i is not a why bike; it's a why-not bike.

Why not ride to the gelato place on a summer night? Why not rip on your way to get groceries? And, yes, giving in to those kid-id urges now and then, why not corner like a flat-track motorcycle racer? I have yet to gather the courage to bike-surf it down the street, but give the bike time. I won't set anyone's yard on fire, though. Probably.

—JOE LINDSEY

PRICE $660
WEIGHT 32.5 lb. (one size)

Photograph by **MITCH MANDEL**

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BMC Speedfox Trailcrew 02

Swiss. Rowdy as #$%&.

THERE'S A ROCKY, washed-out stretch of singletrack in Rothrock State Forest in central Pennsylvania that has a bit of a reputation. Wildcat is less than a mile long, but it averages a 23 percent grade as it dives through dense pine forest and menacing rock gardens, demanding even the locals' utmost attention. As one race organizer puts it, "Riding it is like looking into the jaws of a great white shark."

The trail was the penultimate segment of a two-day enduro that took place over some of the same rough terrain that put the "epic" designation into the Trans-Sylvania Epic stage race. At least I was on the right bike for it.

BMC brought 27.5-inch wheels to its Speedfox platform to fill the gap between its 29er Trailfox enduro racer and the 130mm-travel Speedfox 29er trail bike. But the Trailcrew is not just a smaller-wheeled Speedfox—it's the 29er's bad-boy alter ego. Engineers slacked out the head angle to 66.5 degrees, increased the travel to 150mm, and beefed up the fork and shock. Modest 428mm chainstays offer some whip, but a longer front center gives this 27.5-inch trail bike a relatively long wheelbase overall. This enabled the Trailcrew to be reassuringly stable blasting Rothrock's straight-down-the-fall-line rock gardens. Aggressive knobs on the 2.4-inch-wide Onza Ibex tires bit down on dirt to help me rail turns at speed.

BMC's dual-linkage, APS suspension tends to be progressive and to prioritize pedaling efficiency. But here, engineers designed a plusher, more descent-oriented ride. At the bike park, the Trailcrew floated off drops and landed with a bottomless feel. At slow speeds, however, the APS design combined with Cane Creek's DBAir Inline shock—that, Cane Creek says, optimizes low-speed damping to get mad climbing efficiency without sacrificing traction—to give the suspension a very firm feel. But the lack of perceptible "squish" on climbs helped alleviate the otherwise somewhat grindy effect of the 34-tooth chainring and burly tires.

And in an enduro, the descents are what matter anyway. By the time I got to the top of Wildcat, I had heard so much about the trail that I was ready to get it over with. Right away, I had my butt all the way back to counteract the physics of it all. Water had carved a deep gully through the middle, but the Trailcrew played deftly on either side to find the best line down. It barreled over rivers of loose, fist-sized rocks that would knock a lesser bike off its line and played hopscotch on a series of steppy boulders. A photographer was planted at a rock garden—a sign the finish was near. *Don't screw it up now.* A flick of the wrists, a shift in the hips, a few hard pedal strokes, and I slid home. I accepted the high-fives, exhaled, and laughed. My heart was trying to punch a hole through my chest. But I had ridden the whole thing clean.—GLORIA LIU

PRICE **$5,899**
WEIGHT **28.4 lb. (S)**

Photograph by **MITCH MANDEL**



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Carbon front triangle, aluminum rear ■ All-aluminum frame version also available for $3,899 ■ Cane Creek DBAir Inline shock allows high- and low-speed compression and damping to be adjusted independently ■ Shimano XT hydraulic disc brakes ■ RockShox Reverb seatpost ■ SRAM X01 1x11 drivetrain

Q36.5 Vest L1 Essential

It works hard—effortlessly

As I topped out at the old mining town of Gold Hill, Colorado, the sun was already low in the sky. My jersey was damp from the hour-long climb, and facing a chilly descent, I was thankful to have the L1 Essential in my pocket.

The L1 isn't your average vest. It starts with the fabric: As I picked up speed, the fleece-like lining insulated better than a standard ultralight vest. The softshell outer was impervious to wind, but still breathable: I was warm until my jersey dried, which happened more quickly than with other vests I've tried.

Q36.5 (named for the body's core temperature, in Celsius) was started in 2014 by a veteran product developer from Assos, and also makes premium-priced, highly technical apparel. But where Assos tends toward luxury, Q36.5 pares every item to a minimalist ethic until only the most functional features remain.

Exceptional quality and comfort are the result. The stretchy, ribbed fabric affords a snug fit and makes this the only vest I've worn that doesn't flap at speed. Two rear slits allow access to jersey pockets. The loomed fabric provides some loft. The L1 fits in a pocket but only just—this is a vest for the days when you know you'll need it, and it wicks so well that, once it's on, you might not take it off again.

The air warmed considerably over the 3,000-foot drop back to Boulder, and normally I would've removed my vest at the bottom. But I never thought about it. The L1 just seemed to disappear. **$255—JOE LINDSEY**

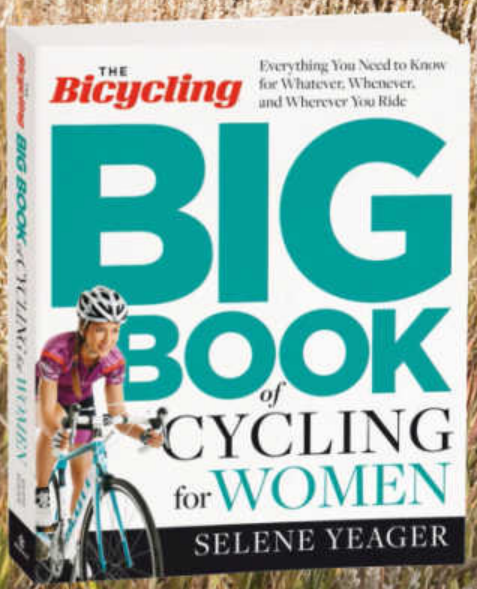
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CamelBak Palos 4LR

Hell yeah—fanny packs are back!



AROUND 25 YEARS AGO, the fanny pack was a socially acceptable way to carry supplies on the trail. But the hydration pack—and fashion police—put an end to that. Now, as riders search for more comfortable alternatives for shorter rides, the fanny pack has rebounded. CamelBak's new Palos 4LR isn't the first mountain bike–specific model to reappear, but it is the first that includes a fluid reservoir—a welcome improvement, since anyone who's tried to holster a pack-mounted water bottle on the fly knows that sipping from a hose is much easier.

The 1.5-liter Antidote reservoir holds enough water for most one- to two-hour rides, and a slick magnetic trap secures the hose to the waist belt between drinks. The Palos has a total of 2.5 liters of storage for gear. A quick-access side pocket is ideal for food, while more valuable items can be stowed in the zippered pocket on the other side. A rear flap system reveals a tool roll with mesh pockets, while the main compartment holds larger items like a minipump and tube. Comfort is far superior to a full-size hydration pack because the weight is confined to your waist, and your back doesn't get as hot and sweaty. Lowering the weight on your body also makes it easier to maneuver around on the bike.

Perhaps in deference to the fanny pack's banishment, CamelBak calls the Palos 4LR a "waist pack." But come on, we all know what this really is—and it's a darn good one at that. $75—RON KOCH

Photograph by COLIN MCSHERRY

SRAM GX

1x takes one more step toward being a basic human right

ALTHOUGH SRAM HAS steadily trickled down the technology from its top-of-the-line, XX1 one-by-eleven (1x11) mountain group since 2012, a 1x drivetrain—a single chainring with a wide-range cassette to provide a similar gear range to a 2x system—was still a premium offering unless you wanted to hack it with a conversion kit. But when SRAM released its GX group last spring, it slashed the minimum buy-in to $564, and as low as $3,500 for a complete bike with GX. And just like that, more of us could dream of one day owning a clean-looking bike with simpler shifting and more handlebar real estate.

GX is almost identical to SRAM's higher-end X1 and X01 groups, primarily differing in materials and manufacturing. The biggest saving: The X01 and XX1 10-42 cassettes are machined from a single piece of steel, while the GX version is held together by stainless steel pins. More affordable materials are also used in the crankset, crankarms, chain, and the derailleur—which otherwise share the same features as their X1/X01 counterparts. The weight penalty: 221 grams over the $1,335 X01 group.

Tested on my Scott Contessa Genius 710, GX shifting felt clean and responded to the same light, quick touch as its premium counterparts. When the terrain really undulated and I was toggling gears often, the shifting was just slightly less refined compared with the X1/X01-equipped bike I'd also been recently riding. But GX was still accurate and reliable, and I could swiftly dump two to three gears when needed. The derailleur is designed to keep the chain taut and quiet, and it does, and the chainring's alternating narrow and wide teeth prevent chain drop. GX is compatible with SRAM's higher-end 1x11 groups so you can save on replacement parts. And it's also available as a 2x with the 10-42 cassette for a monstrous gear range.

I recently lent the GX bike to another editor. Afterward, I asked for her impression of the shifting. She shrugged, "It was good. I never would have thought about it if you hadn't asked." Changing gears on the trail should always be such a nonissue. And now it can be for more of us.—GLORIA LIU



PRICE $564, as tested ■ WEIGHT 1,831g

Photograph by **JONATHAN PUSHNIK**

Blinky Madness

These feature-packed blinkies will keep you safe whether you're making or breaking curfew

1 BONTRAGER FLARE R TAILLIGHT Bontrager says the Flare R's brilliant, 65-lumen daytime flash mode (many blinkies are under 10 lumens) is visible from a staggering distance of two kilometers. The tools-free clip attaches quickly and securely to seatposts, and the Li-Ion battery charges in two and a half hours. In night flash mode, it lasts 23 hours. $60
—JOE LINDSEY

2 KNOG BLINDER ROAD R70 Knog's quirky design aesthetic and a wide beam set the Blinder apart from typical blinkies. Seventy lumens, a full-kilometer range, and five modes (two steady, three flashing) make you visible day or night. An easy-to-use, integrated universal mount works with round and aero seatposts. Run time is up to 20 hours on eco-flash mode, and charging is via a built-in USB plug, so you'll never be invisible just because you forgot your cable. $60
—MIKE YOZELL

3 BLACKBURN 2'FER With the touch of a single button, the 2'FER can switch from headlight to taillight—toggle between flashing or solid 60-lumen white, or the flashing or solid 20-lumen red output. The headlight modes are plenty to guide you home in the dark when aprés-ride celebrations go a little longer than planned. $25
—GLORIA LIU

4 GARMIN VARIA REARVIEW RADAR There's nothing else like the Varia. A display unit on the stem (or a Garmin Edge 1000) warns you of cars approaching from the rear, with estimated closing speed and distance. The Varia also alerts drivers to your presence, with progressively brighter blinking as a car approaches. It made me feel safer than I had anticipated. $200, taillight only; $300 with head unit
—MATT PHILLIPS

5 SPECIALIZED FLUX EXPERT TAILLIGHT One of a new generation of lights designed for day and night use, the Flux boasts a 110-lumen output with three modes—flash, surge, and steady—and charges in 90 minutes via its built-in USB stick. A sensor boosts daytime light output, and visibility is a full kilometer in midday. $100—M.Y.



Photography by **MITCH MANDEL**


GARMIN
FRONT
REAR
GARMIN
4
5

ravens *caaaaaw*, and I am still thinking about my awesomeness.

What feels like several hours later, my pace is slowing considerably. It's hard pushing a fully loaded Fatboy across a surface the consistency of sugar. Billy says that every 20 to 30 miles of winter fat-biking is like 100 on a road bike. My confidence wavers, but up ahead—another cyclist! Lumbering through the gripless snow, he asks, "Have you seen any markers lately?"

Come to think of it, I hadn't.

We turn around, ride for a few moments, and come upon another rider who also seems off course. Together we peloton back down the trail and meet yet another. Kate Batten lives in Denali Park and is a certified badass, yet she barks about giving up because she'd wasted so much time looking for the trail. I offer that I sort of remember Billy telling us to turn on the Little Susitna River and that I am pretty sure we'd passed it. Soon we are all riding even farther back the way we came. We hit the river, see the pie plate, and hang a right. The sun is now low enough in the sky that it's feeling frostbite cold.

We all release air from our tires, but continue at a pace too slow for me to generate wattage. I make the hard decision to press on without them because I need to stay warm. I wind along the Little Su for what seems like another hour, then onto another trail heading north.

TWENTY MILES DOWN an Alaskan trail in winter is no place to start feeling as though you can't continue. That's why this race, no matter what distance you sign up for, is kind of a big deal. It's more so in the dark. Billy says he's even had trailbreakers on snowmachines freak out and break into empty cabins.

I climb a hill shrouded in trees and snow, wolf shadows running through the beam of my headlamp. The black of night closes in and I feel panic rising. I debate whether to throw a full-blown, fall-on-the-ground, crying go-to-pieces. Yet from deep inside, a new thought, far-off, echoing, ludicrous: I am (I believe) the second-fastest female. There's still a chance at glory.

A new energy sustains me for several moments. Until I think about what glory will entail. I will have to reach Dismal Swamp, choke down food, and ride back through the soul-crushing darkness. For three, maybe four seconds, I think I'll go for it, before it occurs to me why I'd returned to Alaska 20 years after falling in love with winter cycling.

It isn't about going fast or covering distance.

It's about taking a risk and getting to see something holy through your effort. As Billy would later say: "There is no place like Alaska, alone, on a bike, in the winter, to make you know you're in the real world."

I give up any notion of racing in exchange for slowing down, feeling the night, and letting myself experience every sensation. Back on my bike I pedal 1,000 strokes, stop, eat, then walk 100 steps. Repeat. After a tiny, freezing eternity, I smell woodsmoke and chili, and see the glowing tents at Dismal Swamp just ahead.

Inside the main tent, I dry my clothes, sip hot cocoa, and eat more than my share of free dinner rolls. I then walk back into the cold and find a cot in a tent that no one's claimed. Once more, I think briefly about racing on toward the finish.

As if on cue, the Northern Lights ripple through the sky above me. Unfurling in waves, electric green and mystical. I stand outside and watch, because who gets to be on the Iditarod Trail witnessing such a phenomenon? There's heat and more cocoa. And the cot—so comfy.

EVERYONE HAD LEFT when I got up the next morning. But I'd spent the night under a pulsating green glow, risen at my leisure, and ridden into a landscape that the night before had been cloaked in darkness and where I now saw a bush plane tethered by ice screws, and dog teams training for the Iditarod. I climbed the hill above the lake, seeing now that it looked out onto the so-called Sleeping Lady, a sweeping mountain that leads to the southwestern edge of the Alaska Range.

Later I'd learn that Billy had rerouted the course because he'd wanted us to see as much of this land as we could. Though he'd be criticized for the change, when I look back, I'm grateful.

For the entire ride to the finish, I weathered the saddle sores Billy had predicted. In the light of day, in the beauty of Alaska, I was more than able to take it, simply by standing as I pedaled. **B**



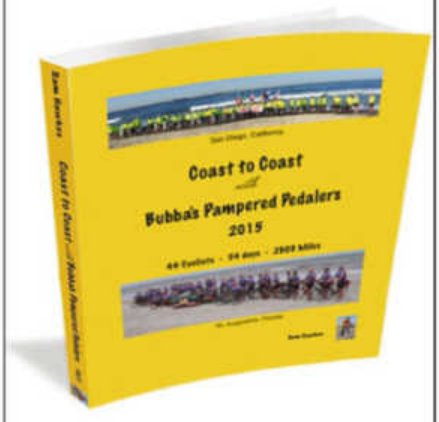
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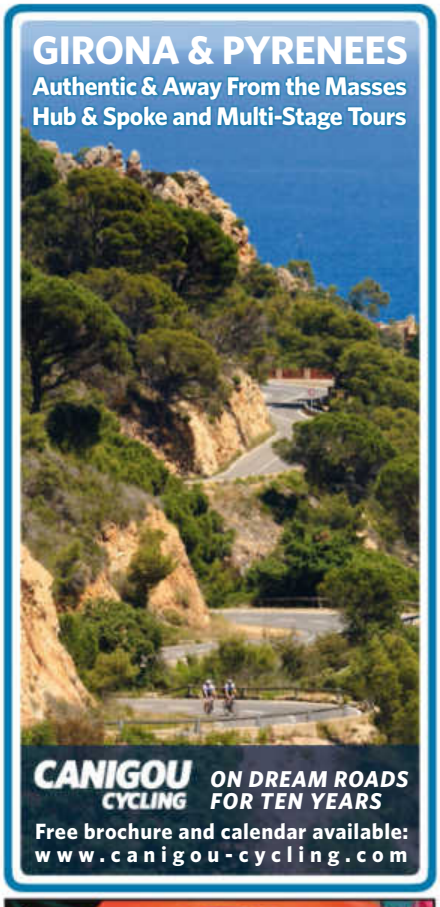
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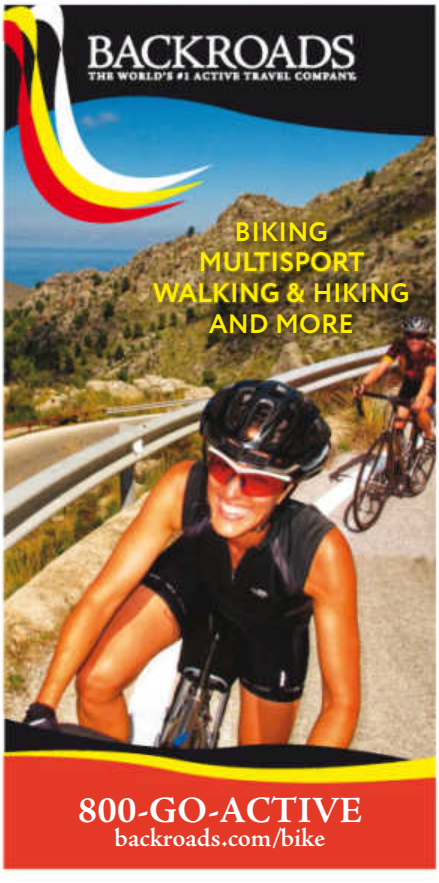






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THIS WAY

OUR ONGOING EXAMINATION INTO THE NATURE OF EXISTENCE, THE MEANING OF LIFE, AND MUCH MORE IMPORTANT STUFF



MIKE DIMKICH

47, guitarist for Bad Religion, and former member of The Cult

WOODLAND HILLS, CA

	or	
Allez! ☐		☒ *Venga!*[1]
Arriving ☒		☐ Leaving
Breakaway ☒		☐ Sprint
Caps ☒		☐ Hats
Cat ☐		☒ Dog
Classics ☐		☒ Grand Tours[2]
Climbing[3] ☒		☐ Descending
Color ☐		☒ Weight[4]
Drop bar ☒		☐ Flat bar
Fame ☐		☒ Glory
Fast ☒		☐ Strong
Flat ☐		☒ Rolling
Handmade ☒		☐ High tech
Heart ☒		☐ Legs
Less ☐		☒ More
Low socks ☐		☒ Tall socks[5]
Beat ☐		☒ Cadence
Components ☐		☒ Frame
Dirt ☐		☒ Gravel
Embro ☒		☐ Tights
Fashion ☐		☒ Style[6]
FTP ☐		☒ PSI
Interval ☐		☒ Session
Melody ☐		☒ Rhythm
New ☐		☒ Used
Paved ☒		☐ Unpaved

1. Let me add the most important Spanish expression: *tranquilo.* 2. The attrition blows my mind. I'm wrecked after three weeks of touring, not racing full-gas daily. (However, I can relate to the mixed blessing of the rest day!) 3. I come from an ultramarathon background, so the misery and ecstasy of climbing is my favorite form of rewarding and abusing myself. Descending, I broke my collarbone and had it fixed three days before a European tour opening for The Who. 4. None of my bikes are particularly light. So I keep myself light. It's cheaper and makes one appear faster. 5. I am attempting to paraphrase my dear friend and cycling mentor Mr. Brian Holm. Tall socks. Period. Short socks are for East Germans and make legs look fat. 6. As a kid, I looked at the Sex Pistols and The Clash and was as taken by their style as by their music. I feel the same about cycling.

Photograph by **SHANE MCCAULEY**

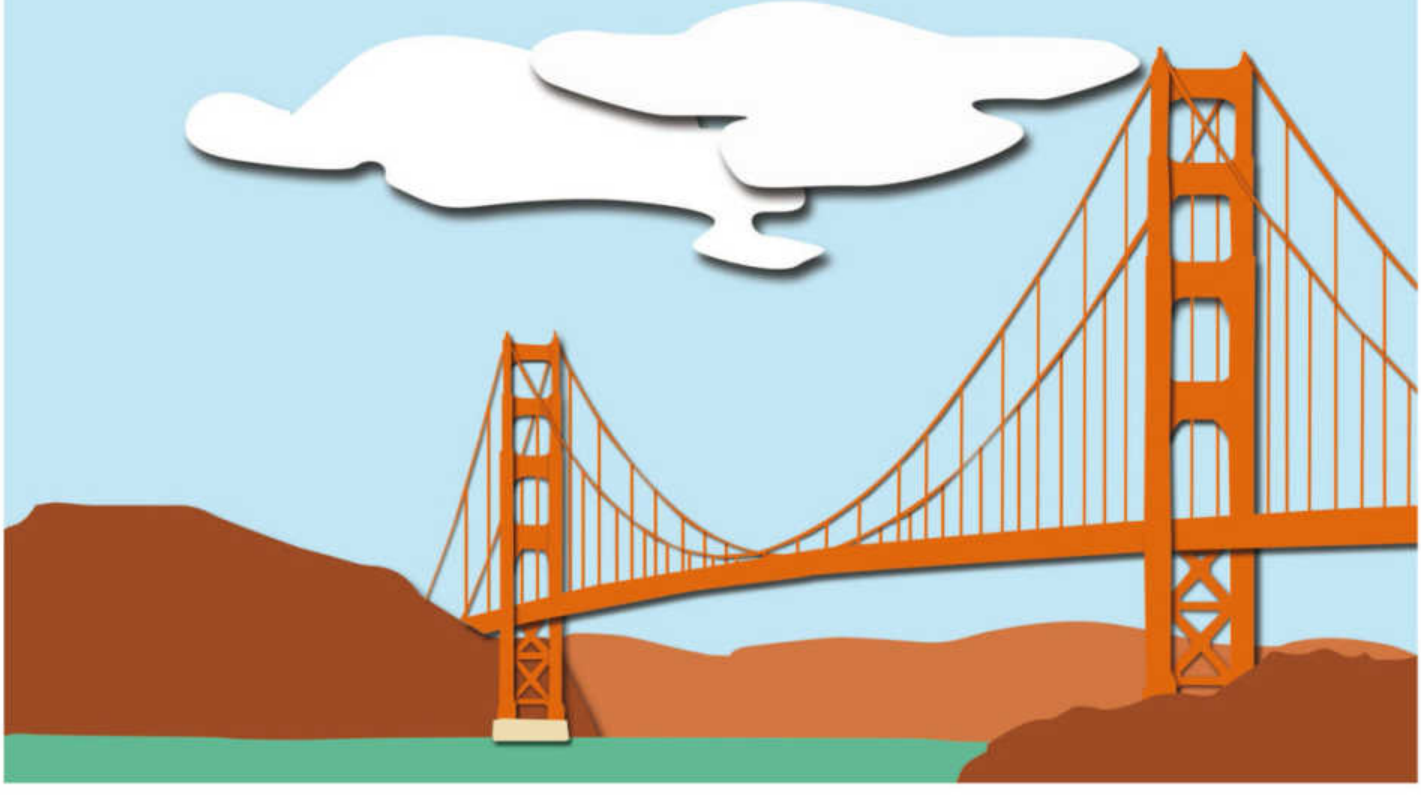
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